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PLUCK AND LUCK

STORIES OF ADVENTURE.

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A FIREMAN • AT • SIXTEEN; OR, THROUGH FLAME AND SMOKE.

By EX-FIRE-CHIEF WARDEN

AND OTHER STORIES



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A FIREMAN AT SIXTEEN

OR, THROUGH FLAME AND SMOKE

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CHAPTER I.—Father and Son.

Walter Bayne was the son of Will Bayne, the foreman of "Hook and Ladder Truck No. 1" of the town of Mill Dale. He was sixteen years old and going to school at the time of which we write. Among his school fellows he was very popular, for he had a kindly disposition and a love for fun and frolic that cropped out on all occasions. Then he was the strongest boy in school, the swiftest runner, and, withal, a manly courage that made all the weaker ones seek him for protection when imposed upon by rude companions. Walter's father, Will Bayne, was regarded as the most daring fireman in the town. He had saved several lives at various fires, sometimes at the risk of his own, and the papers had praised him to the utmost that language would permit. The council of the town had voted him a gold medal, and the brave fireman and his wife were very proud of it. But the Baynes were very poor. Will Bayne was an assistant foreman in one of the mills and out of the scanty savings of his wages he had been making quarterly payments on the little cottage home in which they lived for several years. The cottage stood almost on the river bank, and from the windows of the rear rooms they could look out at the stream as it rippled over the rocks towards the falls a half mile below, which furnished the immense water power to the mills. Young Walter Bayne seemed to have inherited the native instincts of a fireman, for he would spring out of his bed at any hour of the night, at the first clang of the great fire bell, to accompany his father to the scene of conflagration. Then at school he would organize a boy fire company, set a pile of leaves on fire and make a long run, with an imaginary fire engine, to get to it.

One night he heard the great bell clang, and he and his father left the house at the same time. Will Bayne ran to the headquarters of the Hook and Ladder Company, whilst Walter made a straight cut for the fire down in the third district. Walter was there ahead of the hook and ladder by one minute. People were running out of the house, which was a tenement, whilst the dense black smoke was boiling out of the windows in immense volumes. Hearing screams on the third floor just as the hook and ladder truck

appeared in sight, Walter darted into the house, rushed through the dense black smoke to the third floor, guided by the screams of a girl, and burst in the door of a rear apartment. There he saw a young girl about his own age shrieking wildly for help.

"Keep quiet now," he said, "and I'll get you out all right."

"Oh, save me! Save me!" she cried, throwing her arms around him.

"Yes, but keep quiet. The stairs are ablaze. Here, let me wrap this around you and you'll be safe enough," and he ran to a bed in a corner of the room and snatched a blanket from it.

That he threw over the young girl, completely enveloping her from head to feet. Then he caught her in his arms, lifted her clear of the floor and dashed out of the room with her. The girl quietly submitted, and in another moment he was descending the stairs in a cloud of dense black smoke. He had to hold his breath all the way down-stairs, and when he reached the bottom of the flight he was completely used up and had to swallow a cloud of the smoke. It strangled him, but he made a desperate run toward the front and passed out to the street, stumbling and rolling over on the ground with his fair burden. Some of the firemen made a dash for them and brought them away. The girl was badly scared, but unharmed, when she was taken from the blanket. She turned to Walter and thanked him for saving her life, and then darted away in the crowd of spectators. It was quite a surprise to Will Bayne when he saw what his stalwart boy had done. He patted him on the back and said:

"Good for you, Walter. But you are not a fireman. Keep out of the way, or you may be hurt."

The next moment a piercing scream from the burning building told the perspiring fireman that all had not been saved yet. There was a rush for the ladder, Will Bayne in the lead. He ran up like a squirrel, and entered a fourth story window. There he found a very stout lady some forty years of age screaming for help at the top of her lungs.

"Here's help, ma'am," he said. "Here's a ladder. Make haste and run down. The walls will fall in five minutes."

"Oh, I can't go down a ladder. I'll fall and be killed," and she wrung her hands and kept up her screams for somebody to save her.

"Run down the ladder, ma'am," he repeated. "If you stay here death by fire is certain. If you fall you won't be any worse off, and will have a chance. Get a good hand hold and go slow, and you won't fail. Here, let me help you through the window."

But he could do nothing with her. She would do nothing but scream for help. Bayne turned to the window and called through his trumpet:

"Bring up a rope here!"

Jim Bergen, one of the hook and ladder men, seized a strong rope, which was coiled ready for instant use, and dashed up the ladder with it. It is surprising how fast a good fireman can run up a ladder.

"Here, Jim," said Bayne as the fireman entered the window. "She won't go out on the ladder, so we'll have to lower her with the rope."

"Gosh!" gasped Jim as he saw the bulk of the stout lady. "We need a derrick, Will."

"Yes, but we haven't time to build one," and in a trice the foreman had the rope around the woman's waist.

"Now you must get out, ma'am!" cried Bayne. "You can't fall, for we will hold to the rope. You see it's safe enough now."

She was so nervous and excited that she evidently could not understand a word that was said to her.

"If you don't go out we will throw you out and lower you with the rope!" cried Bayne. "Take your choice and be quick about it!"

She wrung her hands and cried all the more.

"Take hold of her, Jim!"

The two firemen seized and bore her to the window, feet foremost. The rough handling she received recalled her to something like an appreciation of the situation, and she caught hold of the ladder and began to descend. But when she arrived opposite the windows of the rooms on the next floor below she was met by a dense volume of smoke, and a wicked tongue of red flame reached out and threatened to catch her. She stopped and began screaming again.

"Go on down!" cried Bayne.

"Come down! Come down," yelled the firemen below.

Bayne ran down the ladder to her and tried to soothe her excitement. But it was no use.

"Here, Jim, wrap the rope three times around the rung. I'm going to push her off. It's the only chance to save her and ourselves."

It was quickly done, and then Bayne pushed her off the ladder, leaving her swinging some thirty feet above the ground. They lowered her as fast as they dared let the rope out, and at the foot of the ladder stood Walter Bayne, looking up anxiously.

"Come down, father," he cried, "the walls are going to tumble!"

As soon as the woman touched the ground she was borne away by the firemen. Seeing the woman safe Bayne and Bergen started to descend the ladder. But when a little over half way down a brick came tumbling from a chimney top, struck the ladder, and bounded outward. In its descent it struck Bayne squarely on top of his head. His fireman's hat had already fallen,

and hence there was no protection for his head. When the falling brick hit him Bayne sank like a limp rag against the ladder, and the next moment lost his grip. Down he came, but Walter was below with outstretched arms, and as he came down he caught him. But the blow bore them both to the ground. Walter staggered to his feet and started away from the dangerous locality with his father in his arms. But ere he made three paces the wall came down with a terrible crash, and both son and father were buried beneath the debris.

CHAPTER II.—The Old Fireman's Hurt.

A cry of horror broke from the firemen when they saw Bayne, Bergen and Walter crushed under the fallen walls. But the sounds of their cries had not died away ere they saw Walter rise and shake off the burning debris and proceed to lift his father up again. They sprang to his assistance, and in an incredibly short space of time had both firemen out of the ruins. Both Bayne and Bergen were unconscious, and, as there was no hospital in the town, they were conveyed to their homes. A man ran on ahead to Bayne's cottage down by the river to tell his wife that the men were bringing him home very badly hurt. She sprang out of bed, and asked through the window:

"Is Will alive?"

"Yes, ma'am," said the man at the door.

She hurriedly dressed and put the house in order, her heart sinking in her bosom like a lump of lead. He was covered with dirt and dust, and face and hands almost smoked black, and was bruised in a number of places.

"Walter," said his mother, "is your father killed?"

"No, mother, but he is hurt. They are bringing him home."

"Are you hurt?"

"Not much."

The party arrived, bearing the brave fireman on a litter. Mrs. Bayne tried hard to control herself, and succeeded.

"Madam," said good old Dr. Williams, "your husband and son are heroes. They have saved several souls to-night."

"What is that to me if my husband loses his life?" she replied in the deep anguish of her soul as she looked at the soot-stained face of the daring fireman on the litter.

"Oh, he is by no means a dead man yet, ma'am," said the doctor. "Just lay him on the bed, and I will look and see to what extent he is hurt."

She showed them into the bedroom in the rear of the front parlor, and they laid him on the bed there. Dr. Williams made an examination of his hurts, and found that he was bruised in a dozen places, and that some of them were quite serious. Days and weeks passed, and some of the wounds healed rapidly. Yet the brave fireman remained confined to his bed as helpless as an infant. The doctors held a consultation, and decided that his spinal column was so badly injured that he would never have the strength to walk again. It was a terrible blow to the faithful wife and her

two children. Little Nellie was but ten years old and could not appreciate it to its full meaning. But Walter and his mother could. Walter was not very demonstrative in his disposition, but he felt deeply and keenly the hard blow the family had received. But his mother was heart-broken in her grief, though she tried to keep it concealed from her husband.

"Don't worry, mother," said the brave boy to his mother. "The mortgage on the house is not due for several months yet. I'll stop school now and go to work. You don't know how strong I am. I can do a man's work if I am but sixteen years old. I'll take care of you and father and Nellie," and Walter's eyes flashed with the stern resolve to do as he said he would or die in the attempt.

Everybody in Mill Dale had been talking about the heroic rescue of Minnie Taylor by Walter Bayne on the night his father was hurt. He had brought the girl out unharmed from the very jaws of death, and everybody was singing his praises.

"He has the making of a good fireman in him," said Fire Chief Wyckoff, the foreman of one of the big mills below the falls.

"So he has," said another old fireman. "He gets it from his father, one of the bravest firemen I ever knew. If he were older I'd try hard to get him into our company."

"He will have to leave school now," remarked the chief, "since the income of the family is cut off. I fear they will all have a hard time of it."

"So do I. He is not a skilled workman, and can't get the pay of one."

"Yes. There he goes now. I guess he is on the lookout for a job now."

The foreman saw young Walter come into the mill and go into the business office. Walter had come to ask for work. The superintendent was a very stern kind of a man, and very unpopular with the operatives. He owned a good deal of stock in the mill and drew a large salary also as superintendent.

"Mr. Bradshaw," said Walter, on entering the superintendent's office, "can you give me any work to do?"

The pompous superintendent looked over his gold-rimmed glasses at him, and asked:

"Who are you and what can you do?"

"My name is Walter Bayne. I am strong and willing to work at anything."

"Walter Bayne, eh?"

"Yes, sir."

"You have never worked in a mill before?"

"No, sir."

"Well, I don't see that we can give you any work. We have no work now for green hands."

"Have you no need for a strong laborer?" Bayne asked.

"I know just what I want, young man, without any questioning from you. Get out now!"

Walter looked at him in some surprise for a moment or two, to the very great annoyance of the superintendent. But he opened the office door and passed out without saying another word, and was about to leave the mill, when Foreman Wyckoff spoke to him, saying:

"Looking for work, Walter?"

"Yes, sir."

"None here?"

"No, sir."

"Well, I am sorry. Wherever you apply refer to me—the chief of the fire department—and I'll say all the good things I can in your favor."

"Thank you, sir," said Walter. "I know that will help me find work somewhere," and he bowed to the chief and passed out of the mill.

He called at three other mills with a like result, and the outlook was very discouraging, for the mills furnished all the employment to be had in the town—almost.

On returning home in the middle of the afternoon he reported to his mother and father his failure to find work.

"You can try again to-morrow," said the father.

"Yes, and so I will," he replied. "But I know what I can do. I can catch some fish for supper," and he looked out of the window at the water dancing over the rocks. "Just on the other side of that big boulder out there I can get two or three big fish, and you can lie here and see me land 'em on the rock, father."

Walter left the house and half an hour later he was leaping from rock to rock, with a ten foot board in his hand, on which he intended to cross over to the big boulder. His father lay in his bed by the window and watched him make his way to the rock on the board. Soon he was deeply engaged in angling for the fish he suspected of making a home under the rock, and in a little while he caught a fine trout weighing some two or three pounds. He held it aloft to let his father see the beauty. He caught a glimpse of his mother's face at the window and held the fish up again. Then he angled for another, and pretty soon had the good luck to catch a larger one.

"This is luck as well as fun," he said, "and it means a good supper all around, too."

"Oh, Walter," called a girlish voice behind him. "May I come out there and fish with you?"

It was the voice of Josie Wyckoff, the only daughter of the chief of the fire department.

"Yes, come ahead!" he answered, and she came tripping over the stones like a fairy, and finally walked the plank which landed her by his side.

"Oh, those are beauties!" she exclaimed, on seeing the two he had just caught.

"So they are. Here, let me bait your hook so you can try your luck."

"You are kind, Walter," she said, as he carefully baited her hook for her.

"Just drop it over on that side, now, and I'll bet you catch a big one."

She did so, and in a very little while was pulling hard at a fish who seemed determined not to leave the water.

"Steady, Josie!" cried Walter, and she held a taut line on the fish, moving about the rock in order to get plenty of room to play him.

Suddenly her feet slipped from under her and she disappeared from sight like a flash. The next instant Walter dropped his pole and plunged in after her. His mother seeing him do that fell fainting to the floor by her husband's bedside.

CHAPTER III.—The Young Fireman.

Walter Bayne was a splendid swimmer, and had no fear of deep water. Many a time he had leaped into water ten times his depth and thought

nothing of it. But now he was in a mad current which went leaping over rocks and ragged boulders on its way to the falls below. Yet the danger did not deter him. He never thought of it, in fact, but boldly plunged in and came up within a few feet of her. A few bold strokes brought him to her. He caught and held her head above the water. She caught him around his neck and held on for dear life.

"Don't squeeze me so hard, Josie," he said. "Hold on to my collar and I'll swim out with you."

"Save me!" gasped the terror-stricken girl.

"I will if you will hold on to my collar," he replied.

The current crashed them against a rock just below the surface of the water, and came near separating them. Josie uttered a cry of pain and fear, but Walter held on to her and said:

"Now hold on to me and I can make yonder rock, where we will be safe."

She did hold on to him, and the brave youth struck out to make the point some distance below and quite near the shore. By this time the alarm had spread through the nearest mill that a boy and a girl were drowning in the river, and fully two hundred men and women ran out to see if they could render aid.

"Pull hard, lad!" cried a strong-lunged mill-hand. "Pull hard and make for yonder rock! Hold onto him, girl! God help the brave boy! Pull hard! A few more brave strokes! Down they go! That current is terrible! Ah! There they are again! Pull hard now! Bravely done, my boy! You're a brave man! Be careful! If you miss it you'll go over the falls! Pull hard! Two or three more strokes! Ah! There you are! Thank God!" and the strong man was so wrought up that he burst into tears of joy when he saw that the lad had reached the rock and saved both himself and the girl. Women who witnessed the brave boy's struggle cried and laughed by turns.

"Why, it's Walt Bayne!" cried one of the women.

"A hero like his father!" cried another.

"And Josie Wyckoff! Here, Wyckoff! It's your Josie! She is safe, thank God!"

Wyckoff was chief of the fire department and foreman in the mill where William Bayne, Walt's father, had worked. When the two were brought ashore Josie was clasped to her father's heart, and brave Walter's hand was shaken by all the men and women who could get at him.

"Walter, my boy!" exclaimed Chief Wyckoff, grasping the lad's hand, "you have saved my child! I am your friend for life. You are a brave boy, Walter. A brave boy! You are the son of the bravest man I ever knew, and you are just like him."

The overjoyed father bore his daughter home in his arms and Walter turned and ran to his home to put on a dry suit of clothes.

"Oh, my son!" screamed his mother, on seeing him enter alive and well. "Thank God, you are saved."

"Did you save the girl, Walter?" his father asked from the next room.

"Yes, father," he replied.

"Come here and give me your hand, boy! You did just what I would have done. You are a chip

off the old block!" and father and son clasped hands and looked into each other's eyes.

"I couldn't help it, father," said Walter. "She couldn't swim and I could. My fish are out there on that rock. I'll run out and get them, for they are the finest I've caught in many a day."

He ran out of the house again without changing his clothes, and in ten minutes more was back in the house with fish enough for three meals. Then he changed his clothes and talked with his father and mother and little Nellie till evening, when Chief Wyckoff and his wife called at the house to see the parents and again thank the son for saving their only child from a watery grave. When they went away they left with the happy mother an order for a barrel of flour and a ton of coal.

"Hello!" exclaimed Walter, when he heard his mother tell his father of the gift. "I am of some account after all, ain't I?"

"Of course you are," said the father. "He who saves a life is greater than he who captures a city."

Later in the week the hook and ladder company of which Walter Bayne's father was foreman when he was hurt elected Walter an honorary member, and when the secretary notified him of the fact his father's eyes brightened.

"That's an honor you ought to be proud of, my boy," he said. "None but men grown and solid citizens at that are ever so honored. You ought to be proud of it."

"I am proud of it, father, and am going to run with 'em after this."

"That's right. Mary, girl. Fix up my old fireman's suit for him. You will have to cut two inches off the trousers. His head and mine are the same size. He can wear the helmet. Stand in your father's place, my boy, and I know you won't disgrace the name."

"Will! Will!" exclaimed Mrs. Bayne. "What are you saying to the boy? He is adventurous and reckless enough now without any encouragement in that direction. I would prefer that he keep out of the fire company."

"That isn't like you, Mary, my girl," said the brave fireman. "You are letting your fears get the better of you. Don't do that, Mary."

Mrs. Bayne turned away with a shudder. The next day the alterations in the father's fireman's suit were made and Walter tried them on. He looked every inch a fireman.

"Go down to the company's headquarters this evening, my boy," said his father, "and let 'em see you. Tell 'em that I sent you to do duty in my place, and that you will answer for the name of William Bayne."

Walter went down to the company's quarters, where the boys received him with a wild cheer.

"My father told me to answer to his name when it is called," he said.

"Yes, and to your own, too," said the assistant foreman. "You are under age, but we'll suspend the rules to get you in. You come up to the mark in everything else."

"Yes, that's so," cried a dozen others.

Chief Wyckoff came in, and the greeting he gave Walter aroused the enthusiasm of the boys to the highest pitch.

"I am glad you are with us, my boy," said the chief, "because we can now help——"

Clang! Clang! Clang!

The great fire-bell struck for the third district, and every fireman sprang to his post. Walter caught the enthusiasm, and dashed away with them. He was as fleet of foot as the swiftest of them, and when they reached the scene of the fire he was as fresh as any man in the company. It was a six story tenement house which had caught fire, and it was burning like a tinder-box. He dashed into the burning building with two other firemen, and soon came out with a little boy in one arm and a girl on the other. Delivering them to sympathizers, he darted into the building and ran up two flights, where he found two terror-stricken women. Two other firemen were with him; but when they undertook to go down with them they found all retreat cut off. The entire stairway was in flames.

"Up to the next floor!" cried one of the firemen, and they retreated.

There they found that they would have to go to the next floor, which they found to be the top one.

"The ladder can't reach the window!" cried one of the firemen, as he looked out and down at the firemen.

"To the roof, then!" cried the other.

They ran up the little ladder which led to the scuttle in the roof, forced it open and emerged to the top of the doomed building. There they saw that the crowd below were screaming and pointing up to the next house, which was also burning. Walter Bayne threw himself face downward on the roof, crawled to the edge and looked over.

"My God!" he cried. "There are two young girls in the rooms just below us, and they are doomed unless we can save them."

A clothes line was on the stakes on the roof, and Walter quickly seized it, doubled it, and proceeded to fasten it around his waist.

"Here!" he cried. "You two are strong enough to hold me. Lower me to that window, and I'll save 'em or perish with 'em."

"Good! Brave boy!" exclaimed one of the firemen, and the two did as he asked.

The next moment the vast crowd of spectators below were dismayed at seeing a fireman suspended from the roof. When he arrived at the window he reached out, caught hold of the blind, and pulled himself in. Two young girls immediately threw themselves on him, crying:

"Save us! Oh, do please save us!"

"Yes, that's what I came for," he replied.

"Here, quick! Let me tie you—one of you—with this rope, and they'll pull you up to the roof."

He quickly tied the rope around one of the young girls' waist, and then stood upon the window sill, and sung out to the firemen on the roof:

"Pull away! Up with her?"

on to the rope with one hand and with the other retained his hold on the shutter, whilst calling to the two firemen on the roof to pull hard. They did pull, and one of the young girls swung out of the window with a piercing shriek. The spectators held their breaths in awful, painful suspense, as the young girl hung at that dizzy height. The slightest accident and death would be inevitable and quick. But no accident happened, and the half unconscious young girl was drawn safely to the roof, amid the wild cheers of the crowd below. Then the rope was lowered again and Walter caught it. In another minute he had it tied securely around the waist of the other girl.

"Pull away!" he yelled, and even the people below heard his words and took up the cry.

"Pull away, pull away!" came up from the spectators like the roar of old ocean in a storm.

Again a girl swung out of the window, and again did the sturdy fellows on the roof pull hard on the rope that held a human life suspended between earth and sky. She was landed safely, and again the frantic yells came up from below.

"Quick! quick!" yelled the hook and ladder boys below. "Lower the rope to Walt. The flames have reached him! Quick, Henry, or you'll be too late!"

They hurriedly lowered the rope and Walter reached out for it, though the window was like a smoke-stack of a steamboat, so great was the volume of smoke that poured through it. After having tied the rope around himself securely, he sung out:

"All right! Pull away!"

They did pull away, and as Walter was a pretty solid sort of a boy, they found it hard work. It was quite different from lowering him from the roof, and for a time, it seemed as if they would not be able to pull him up. But they succeeded at last, and when the crowd below saw that he was safe, they made the welkin ring with their cheers. All three were nearly exhausted from the hard strain, and they laid down on the hot roof to rest a minute or two.

"Oh, come away!" cried one of the girls. "The fire will soon burst through the roof!"

"That's so," said Walter, rising to his feet and staggering away toward the roofs on the right of them. "Come on, boys, or you'll get caught."

The other two staggered to their feet and slowly followed him and the two girls off the heated roof. The firemen below, seeing that they had escaped to another roof, hastened to enter a house two doors from the burning building, and asked permission to pass up through to the roof.

It was promptly granted, and one of them ran up to the scuttle and unfastened it.

"Here you are!" he cried, as he threw it open. "Come down now as quickly as you can."

They made haste to get down, Walter showing the two girls how to get down through the scuttle. When they reached the street, the crowd again cheered them, and Walter became the hero of the hour from that moment.

Chief Wyckoff ran up to him and grasped his hand, saying:

"Walter Bayne, you are a hero. I am proud

CHAPTER IV.—A Perilous Rescue.

The situation was one of intense dramatic interest as well as of danger. To the vast crowd of spectators below, whose upturned faces were exposed by the red glare of the burning building, it seemed as if the daring boy must fall and be dashed to pieces on the pavement. But he held

to take you by the hand. Those girls would have perished but for you."

"What's the matter with the two fellows who pulled 'em up to the roof?" Walter asked, as he returned the chief's hand-shake.

"Oh, they are all right, too," was the reply, "but the main credit belongs to you."

Then the chief grasped the hands of the other two firemen and said:

"You three have the stuff that heroes are made of. Stand back now and rest a while. There are no more lives to be saved."

They stood aside to let other firemen play on the fire, and were instantly surrounded by the eager crowd of spectators who wanted to shake each one of them by the hand. By and by the hook and ladder truck started to return to their headquarters, and on the way back the crowd gave them a sendoff that made them feel proud of their achievements that night. The next morning everybody in the town was talking about the heroic daring of the sixteen-year-old fireman who had saved the lives of the two poor girls. Chief Wyckoff went by the house of Will Bayne on his way to the mill to tell him about it, and say:

"It would have done your heart good to see him. He seemed to bear a charmed life, and he went where no other fireman would have dared to go, and came out unharmed."

"I am proud of my brave boy, chief," said the helpless ex-fireman. "But don't let him be so reckless, or he'll be brought home dead some day or evening."

"I wish with all my heart that he was out of that fire company," said Mrs. Bayne. "If he should be crippled or killed what would become of us?"

"Don't talk that way, Mary," said Will Bayne, "or the chief may think you are opposed to our boy saving human life."

"I am not opposed to that. I would do that myself at the risk of my own life. But there are many good people in this town who are not firemen. They never risk their lives at a fire. Why should my boy risk his life? Is not one in a family enough to lose?"

"Come, come, Mary," said Will Bayne. "Every one to his liking. Walter likes it, and he has proven himself a hero. He may yet——"

"I wish he did not like it," she retorted, interrupting him.

Then she turned to Wyckoff and asked if Walter could not be given work in the mill where he was employed.

"There is no room for him at present," he replied, "but I am going to keep a sharp lookout for him, and if there is any chance for him I will let him know."

The chief went on to the mill, and Walter soon after started in search of work. The family were now reduced to almost absolute want, if not starvation. To make matters worse, the man who held the mortgage on their little home sent a written notice that he expected the last payment to be made when due, as he had made arrangements to use the money.

"We shall lose our home," said Mrs. Bayne, "for we cannot make the payment. We have no money even for bread."

Walter visited several mills and stores in quest of work and failed to get it.

"That is awful," he said. "We shall have to pawn the very beds we sleep on if——"

"Clang! Clang! Clang!"

The great fire-bell startled the town, and in an instant every fireman, wherever employed, made a break for the post of duty. The boy fireman and the Hook and Ladder company reached the fire ahead of the engines, and found that it was in the finest hotel in the town. The house was filled with guests, and the panic among them was simply terrible. Women and children on almost every floor shrieked for help, and the firemen had a busy time getting them out. The building was a four story frame, the wood being dry and very inflammable, hence it was impossible to save it. In looking through the rooms on the third floor to see that no one was left, Walter Bayne discovered a sick lady who had been forgotten in the excitement. She was very ill and could not stand on her feet.

"Madam, I'll wrap the bed-clothes about you, and get you out," he said, suiting his actions to his words.

He gathered her in his arms and made a dash for the stairs, which were now all ablaze. Just as he passed out of the door into the corridor, he caught a glimpse of a man's face and heard a voice say:

"Hurry out or you're lost," and at the same time felt his feet kicked out from under him. He fell to the floor with his burden, though he managed to prevent her receiving any hurt. But she was torn from his grasp, and when he rose to his feet he could see nothing of her. The smoke was so dense that he could not see anything at all, and so he hurried away to escape. But as he made his way to the stairs he stumbled over a body, and stooping to examine it found it to be that of the sick lady he had lost. Quick as he possibly could he snatched her up again and hurried downstairs and succeeded in reaching the street in an almost exhausted condition.

CHAPTER V.—The Hotel Fire—A Rescue And Singular Mishap.

Out on the street one of the firemen came to his relief on seeing him reel and stagger with his burden in his arms.

"This way, Walt," said the fireman, leading him across the street so as to be as far removed from the heat as possible.

The crowd gave way for them, seeing that a sick lady was in the arms of one of them, and they pushed on till they struck a private house, on the stoop of which stood a number of ladies.

"Can we leave this sick woman in your house till she can be moved again?" the fireman asked of a portly old lady on the stoop.

"Yes, of course," was the prompt reply. "Come right in with her," and she led the way into the house, followed by Walter and the other fireman.

"Lay her on the bed—wait a moment till I arrange it," and the elderly lady soon had the bed in good order to receive the sick woman. She was deposited there, and found to be unconscious.

"Send for a doctor," Walter said. "She may

be in a faint," and with that he and the other fireman left the house to return to the scene of conflagration. On the way back he saw good old Dr. Williams in the crowd, and said to him:

"Doctor, there's a sick lady in the red-brick house down there, whom I took out of the hotel. She seems half dead. You had better see her."

"Ah. She must be my patient," said the doctor. "I was wondering if she had been saved," and he hurried off to see her.

The hotel was reduced to ashes and a row of stores on the south side of it threatened with destruction. Walter worked with the hook and ladder boys till there was no more need of their services, after which he returned to headquarters with them. He was hungry—very hungry, and had nothing with which to buy a meal, and he knew that there was no more bread at home than would be needed for supper. What was he to do? He was too proud to let any one know his situation.

"I'll catch some fish," he said. "They won't cost me anything, and I guess I'll have a square meal at supper. What in heaven's name shall we do for breakfast to-morrow?"

He returned home, told his mother and father about the fire at the hotel, and then went to the river.

"I can't understand why that man tripped me up and took the sick woman away from me," he said to himself, as he sat there on the rock and remembered he had a black mustache and very large nose. He kicked my feet from under me and downed me as slick as wet soap. What did he do that for? If he wanted to help me save the woman why did he not say so, and ask to let him take her out. He snatched her from me when I was down, and then left her at the head of the stairs. I wonder if he got out all right himself?"

He was thinking of the incident and debating with himself when he felt a pull at his hook. A quick jerk told him that he had a big fish, and that he would have to be wary in landing him. His invalid father was looking at him from the bedroom window, and he wanted to make sure of the prize. Some twenty minutes was spent in trying to land him, and at last he succeeded in doing so, the prize proving to be a sixteen-pounder.

"Whew!" he exclaimed. "That's lucky! I'll take him to the house at once and let mother clean him. He'll make four or five square meals."

He gathered up the prize and returned home with it.

"Here's fish enough for you, mother," he said, as he entered the kitchen.

"Oh, mercy!" she cried on seeing it. "That's the largest you ever caught."

"I believe it is."

"We can't eat it all, Walter, and it won't keep in warm weather. You can get a price for it at one of the hotels, and buy some bread and butter and——"

"But you want something else besides bread and butter, mother."

"Yes. Sell this big one, and then catch another one for supper. You will have plenty of time."

He acted on her suggestion and sold the big fish for \$1.50, gave her the money, and then caught enough for supper and breakfast. That

evening at the headquarters of the hook and ladder company he was telling some of the firemen about the big fish, when a man came to the door and asked if Walter Bayne was in.

"Yes," said a fireman, "he is. Come in. Walter?"

"Hello," answered Walter.

"A gentleman here wishes to see you."

He went to the door, and there met a man, an entire stranger to him, who asked:

"Are you Walter Bayne?"

"Yes, sir."

"You were at the fire this morning?"

"Yes, I was there."

"You saved a sick lady from the flames?"

"Yes, I believe I did."

"Well, I am her husband. I have come to thank you and give you this," and he thrust a purse into Walter's hand. Then he started to turn away and leave without another word, when Walter caught hold of his arm and said:

"Stop, please, and allow me to thank you, and also ask if the lady is any worse for the terrible excitement through which she passed?"

"Thanks. I think she is a little better if anything," was the reply.

Something in the man's voice excited a desire on Walter's part to see his face, for the stranger stood outside in the shadow. He took him by the arm and pulled him into the light where he saw the face of the man who had tripped him up in the corridor of the burning hotel that morning. But the mustache was gone. The nose was unmistakable, though, and the voice he was sure of. Walter was staggered, but he did not say anything other than to again thank the man for calling.

"What did he give you, Walt?" the fireman who had called him to the door asked.

"I don't know," replied Walt. "I'll look and see," and he produced the purse and examined its contents.

"Money, by George!" exclaimed one of the firemen as he saw a roll of bills taken from the purse.

"Well, I'm glad of that," said Walter, proceeding to count the bills. "Here are twenty \$5 bills, \$100 in all."

"What a windfall!"

"What's his name?" a dozen voices asked.

The purse was examined again, but nothing was found to indicate who the man was. No name—nothing whatever of a written character save what was on the bills.

"Well, you're in luck, my boy," said an old fireman, laying his hand on Walt's shoulder, "and I am glad of it for your father's sake."

They all congratulated him on his good fortune, and he soon left the truck house to hasten home to let his mother know the good news. On his way home Walter could not help thinking of the man who had tripped him up in the corridor of the burning hotel.

"He is the same man," he said to himself, "though he has cut his mustache off. I knew his voice and recognized his nose. What does it mean? He did not care to have me see him in the light to-night when he gave me that purse. I've a mind to tell father all about it and see if he can understand it. It couldn't have been

an accident, that tripping-up business, for he swept my feet from under me like a flash, and—"

Crack! A flash and the report of a pistol within a few feet of him as he was passing an old barn on his way home told him that somebody had shot at his head.

CHAPTER VI.—The Shot in the Dark—The Sick Lady Again.

The flash of the shot nearly blinded the young fireman, who staggered back several paces as if about to fall. He was about to spring at his assailant when a voice some fifty yards on the left sang out:

"Hello, there! Mind how you shoot! You came near hitting me that time."

On hearing that the unknown marksman turned and ran from the spot with such speed as to place him utterly out of sight in the darkness of the night.

"What's the matter there?" cried the voice out on the left, and footsteps were heard approaching.

"That's what I want to know myself," replied Walter, as a man, a citizen on his way home, came up.

"Who fired that shot?"

"I don't know."

"Who was he shooting at?"

"I thought he was shooting at me, as the flash was almost in my face."

"Well, the bullet came within an ace of hitting me. I heard it whistle by me. Have you any idea who done it?"

"Not the least in the world, sir," replied Walter. "I haven't an enemy that I know of."

"Who are you, young man?"

"My name is Walter Bayne."

"The young fireman."

"Yes, sir."

"I have heard of you. I can't see why anybody should want to shoot you. Maybe it was some half drunken fool who wanted to empty his revolver."

"Maybe so, but it looked as if he wanted to blow my head off," and Walter continued on his way home, and the citizen proceeded in the direction of his own residence.

When he reached home, Walter found that his mother had gone to bed, so he did not have time to acquaint her with his good fortune. He went to bed himself and lay awake for hours trying to reason out the incidents growing out of the hotel fire.

"If that sick woman's husband really tripped me up on purpose," he said to himself, "why did he come and give me \$100 to-night for saving her life? Then why did he shave off his mustache? Maybe he got it burned and had to do it. Hanged if it don't puzzle me, anyway. I am sure that somebody shot at me at the corner of Richardson's barn, for the pistol was pointed right at my face when it exploded. Well, maybe I'll find out some day. I just know that mother will be a happy woman in the morning when she finds out about the \$100. It's just half enough to pay off the mortgage on our home."

He fell asleep and slept till morning, when

he sprang up and went out into the kitchen where his mother was preparing some of his fish for breakfast.

"Mother," he said, "I have a present for you," and he threw the roll of bills into her lap.

She gave a scream and snatched up the bills.

"Where did you get this?" she asked.

"They were given to me last night," he replied.

"Who gave them to you?"

"I don't know."

"You don't know the man or woman who gave you such a roll of money as this?"

"No, mother. He did not give me a chance to find out," and then he proceeded to tell her the story of the sick woman at the hotel and how he succeeded in saving her life, adding:

"And last night a man who said he was her husband came to the hook and ladder headquarters and gave me this purse with that roll of bills in it. He went away without giving us a chance to find out who he was."

"Heaven bless him whoever he is!" cried his mother, springing up and running into the bedroom where her husband lay.

"Look! Look, Will!" she said, showing him the bills. "A grateful husband gave this to our Walter for saving the life of his invalid wife yesterday at the hotel fire!"

"Well, that's good," said Bill Bayne, gazing at the roll of bills in her hand. "Our boy is of some use after all, isn't he?"

"Heaven bless him—yes! Another hundred would pay off the mortgage. Oh, if we could only get it from somebody or somewhere!"

"Yes—put it away and don't spend a cent of it. We'll have need for it yet. Maybe we can get enough to pay off the mortgage yet."

Mrs. Bayne was a happy mother that morning. She no longer pleaded with Walter not to be a fireman. She was glad that he had saved human life, and wanted him to save all he could.

"I know it would make you feel better, mother," he said, as he sat down to breakfast. "When I catch on to a good job of work and begin to earn money regularly, you won't want for anything."

"I shall feel much better when you get the job," she remarked.

"Oh, yes, of course. I think Mr. Wyckoff will find a place for me somewhere in the mill where he works."

"I hope so."

Walter went out again in quest of work, and in passing through Main street he met good old Dr. Williams, who hailed him with:

"Hello, Walter!"

Walter tipped his hat to him and went up and took his hand.

"I hear that you are in luck, Walter," the doctor said:

"Yes, sir, a little bit."

"I heard the husband of that sick lady speaking of you in the highest terms of praise. He gave you \$100, did he not?"

"Yes, sir."

"It ought to have been a thousand. They are very rich. The lady is actually better since the fire. The excitement seemed to have benefited her. She wants to see you. When can you call at the hotel?"

"What hotel?"

"Oh, they have taken rooms at the River House," said the doctor. "Better rooms than the others were."

"What is their name?"

"Don't you know? Haven't you heard their name?"

"No, sir."

"Well, that's strange. Their name is Bosworth, and they come from Boston, I believe, for a change of air for Mrs. Bosworth."

"Didn't Mr. Bosworth have a big black mustache, doctor?" Walter asked.

"Yes, and it was ruined by the fire so he had to shave it off to start a new one. That was pretty hot work, was it not?"

"Yes, indeed. He has a big nose, hasn't he?"

"Yes. Why, didn't you see him when he gave you the money last night?"

"Yes, sir, but I thought I had seen him once before, and when I saw him last night without his mustache I was puzzled to make him out."

"Of course; that was natural. Come to the hotel and see her this afternoon if you have time. She asked me to tell you to come, and I would advise you not to fail to do so."

"I shall call at 3 o'clock," said Walter.

"Well, I shall tell her that so she will be expecting you," and the doctor passed on.

At 3 o'clock precisely Walter entered the hotel, and going to the clerk's desk, said:

"I have been sent for by Mrs. Bosworth. Will you please send some one to show me the way up to her rooms?"

"Yes," said the clerk, tapping a bell, to which a boy responded. "Show this gentleman to Room 22."

The boy turned and led the way up-stairs and Walter followed him. At the top of the first flight they met Mr. Bosworth, who stopped the boy, saying to him:

"You may go back. I'll show him the rest of the way myself."

The boy returned and left Walter with the husband of the sick lady.

"What is wanted?" Mr. Bosworth asked, turning to the young fireman.

"Dr. Williams requested me to call at three o'clock, as Mrs. Bosworth wanted to see me," replied Walter, with great frankness.

"Young man, can you keep a secret," Bosworth asked.

"Yes, sir."

"Well, I'll give you one to keep. Mrs. Bosworth is not in her right mind. You must never attempt to see her, as to do so may cost you your life. Keep all that a profound secret and go away at once!"

To say that Walter was surprised as the man uttered these words hardly expresses it. Nevertheless he said:

"Your wishes shall be respected, sir," and with that he made his way down the stairs.

He made his way to a mill he had not visited for employment, and met one of the girls he had saved at the previous mill fire. While the girl was thanking him the foreman came along and ordered the girl to attend to her work in a nasty tone of voice, which brought other girls out on the stairs. The foreman ordered them back to their work. With that the superintendent came out and demanded to know what was the

matter, whereupon the foreman told him that he was interfering with the rules of the mill in relation to the loafing of the hands:

"Young man," said the superintendent, "you want to go down those stairs before you are fired out the window."

"Who is your bouncer here?" asked Walter.

"I can do all the bouncing necessary," replied the superintendent, and with that he seized Walter by the collar and attempted to jerk him towards the stairs. He tore the coat, and the next moment Walter dealt him a blow that sent him rolling headlong down the stairs ahead of him. Walter then coolly descended the stairs, and the super raised up and came rushing at him, and Walter again knocked him down and passed out of the mill.

While he was at the supper table that night an officer came with a warrant for his arrest, charging him with assaulting the mill superintendent. He was taken away. His mother was nearly prostrated over the affair. Walter sent for a young lawyer who was a member of the Hook and Ladder Company. He came, and after talking a while with the young fireman, he advised Walter to swear out a warrant for the superintendent's arrest. The warrant was given to an officer, who soon came into the station with the super, who was highly indignant over his arrest. The next morning the case came to trial, and a number of the mill hands testified that the superintendent struck the first blow by grabbing Walter's collar, and he was acquitted. The super was fined ten dollars and costs.

CHAPTER VII.—The Fire at the Mill.

The superintendent of the Columbia Mills swore to be revenged on the young fireman, and he at once began his spite on the girls who testified in court against him. Four of them were discharged that afternoon, and six others were made to do work that was impossible for them to do well enough to pass inspection. The four girls at once made an outcry, and the next day when the mills opened not one of the 120 girls employed in the place reported for work. The superintendent and owners of the mill were dumfounded at the situation, for they had a very large order to fill, and would have to run on full time with a full force in order to do it. The superintendent was soon told that the four girls would have to be taken back ere any of them would go to work.

"Tell 'em to come back then," said the owners.

"And the other six must be given their usual tasks," said the committee from the strikers.

"What's that?" the superintendent exclaimed. "Do you want to run the mill?"

"No, but we are going to stick to our agreement with each other to stand by any one unjustly dealt with."

The superintendent and the owners declined to submit and the committee went away. The mill closed for the day, and a man was sent to New York for operatives to come out and take the places of the strikers. In the meantime Walter Bayne was still looking for work, but was unsuccessful. So many skilled hands were now

out of work on account of the strike, that he had no show whatever, never having worked in a mill. Meeting Dr. Williams again on the street, the man of medicine said to him:

"I can't understand why Mr. Bosworth told you that his wife was insane. Are you sure that he told you that?"

"Why, doctor, do you have any doubts about it? Sure you don't think that I told you a lie?"

"No; but people can be honestly mistaken sometimes."

"Yes, I know, but not in this case. Did you say anything to him about it?"

"Not a word; but I did to her. She was very much surprised. She says now that she will see you at all hazards, and that you must come to the hotel."

"I don't want to have any trouble with him, doctor."

"I don't think there will be any trouble. She seems to suspect him of having some motive in doing as he did, and wants to investigate it as far as she can."

"What had I better do?" Walter asked.

"See her, of course."

"But how?"

"You must be at some place where a messenger can find you. When Mr. Bosworth is away from the hotel she will send you word and you can meet her in the ladies' parlor of the hotel."

"I'll be at the hook and ladder company's headquarters all day to-morrow," said Walter, "and a messenger can find me there."

"I'll tell her that this evening then."

"If you like."

Walter shook hands with the doctor and passed on, and on the next block he felt some one tap him on the shoulder. On looking around he saw Mr. Elliott, the man to whom his father owed one more payment on his home.

"Walter," said Mr. Elliott, "I am glad I saw you. It will save me the trouble of writing. Tell your father that on yesterday I sold the mortgage on his place to another man, as I was in need of some ready money. It don't make any difference to whom he pays the money, you know."

"Who bought it?" Walter asked.

"Mr. Trainor of the Columbia Mills."

Walter turned pale.

"I am very sorry you did that, Mr. Elliott," he said. "Because you know as well as I do that he is our bitter enemy, and by selling him that mortgage you force either my mother or myself to deal with him."

"Pon my word, I never once thought of that, Walter," said Elliott. "It won't make any difference, though. If you don't wish to have anything to do with him bring me the money on the day before it is due, and I'll settle with him for you, and won't charge anything for services."

Walter knew that the money was not in the house by about one-half, so he simply said:

"Seeing what you have done, all I can say is, that I will tell my father what you have said to me. It is due in about two months, is it not?"

"Yes, two months and four days, I believe."

Walter went back to the hook and ladder headquarters to sit down and think. He was so utterly broken up by what Elliott told him that he

did not know whether it was best to tell his father or not. Whilst he was sitting there the clang of the great firebell startled him. He sprang to duty at once, and in another minute the hook and ladder truck was dashing down the street in the direction of the fire, like a whirlwind. The Columbia Mills were on fire, and intense excitement prevailed all over the lower part of the town. Hook and ladder No. 1 was the first on the ground, as usual, and rendered efficient service in saving thousands of dollars' worth of goods.

Superintendent Trainor was in and out, working like a beaver to save some of the stock. Upon the third floor, where Walter was received so warmly by the mill girls when he went there for work, the fire was raging like a furnace. Walter saw Trainor going up there, and yelled to him to come back. The half dazed man did not hear him, but kept on up. A minute or two later there was a crash, as of something falling, and Walter made a dash up the stairs to see if any one was hurt.

"Good Lord!" he gasped as he looked around, and failed to see the superintendent. "It's the last of him. I must get out myself, or I may be too late."

He ran down one flight and was about to make the descent of the second one when something impelled him to run up once more and look for Trainor. Half way up the stairs he felt a wriggling something rolling down against his legs. It was Trainor, who had succumbed to the heat and smoke, and was utterly unconscious.

"I must get him out," said Walter, "though it will be hard work."

He took him up on his shoulders and staggered to a window.

"Ladder here," he yelled.

They hurried with the ladder, and Walter proceeded to climb out of the window, but he was so near strangled with smoke that he lost his grip and went crashing earthward with his burden.

CHAPTER VIII.—The Invalid and the Fireman.

Strange as it may seem to the reader, when Walter Bayne lost his grip up at the second story window of the mill, he and the unconscious superintendent went rolling down the ladder like two logs. Two of the firemen saw them coming and braced themselves to catch them. They succeeded, but the impetus sent all four rolling over on the ground. They were bruised more or less by the fall and collision, but no bones were broken. Walter was the second one on his feet, exclaiming:

"By George, but I thought I was a goner that time?"

"Are you hurt?" Chief Wyckoff asked of him.

"Not much—just a few bruises I believe."

"You had a close shave."

"Yes, but the superintendent had a closer shave than I did."

"Was it the superintendent that you brought out with you?"

"Yes. He is nearly done for, I guess, as he didn't know anything when I found him."

Trainor was removed to his home and his

family physician called in. He was pretty badly hurt, and the doctor said he would have to lie in bed a week at least. Walter went home to supper and washed himself, and his mother dressed his wounds, or bruises, and then told her and his father what Mr. Elliott had told him.

"But I saved Mr. Trainor's life at the mill this afternoon," he added, "and I don't think, after that, that we have any reason to be afraid of him."

"How strange things do get mixed up sometimes," said Will Bayne as he heard the story. "Trainor bought that mortgage to get us in his power. He is a very vindictive man. He knew that my income had stopped and that we would not have the money with which to make the last payment."

"But what will he do now?" Mrs. Bayne asked.

"The Lord only knows," and the ex-fireman shook his head.

"Surely he won't turn us out when our boy has saved his life," she said.

"No one can tell."

"Can't we get somebody else to take the mortgage and hold it?" Walter asked.

"Ordinarily we could," his father replied. "But just now people know that we have no income and that we cannot even pay the interest on the amount."

"But the place is good for it," said Walter.

"Of course, but it would have to be sold to make it, and nobody cares to place himself where he would have to put us outdoors to make his money. That's the way I look at it."

Walter saw the point and said:

"Well, if we can raise the money in any way we won't ask any favors of John Trainor."

"Of course not. But watch closely and see if Trainor is still your enemy."

During the day he met Dr. Williams, who inquired why he had not been to see Mrs. Bosworth. Then Walter up and told him what had taken place when he went to the hotel to see the lady. He also told him his suspicions as regarded her husband during the fire in which he had rescued her. But he promised to go to the hotel and see Mrs. Bosworth that evening. Then he left the doctor and went home.

Walter did not leave the house again that evening, as he preferred to lie down and rest after the hard work of the mill fire. But the next day he went to the truck house to remain there all day, or at least till he was sent for to go to the hotel. It was about eleven o'clock when a messenger came for him. He hurried away and till he reached the hotel he turned neither to the right or left. On entering the hotel he met Dr. Williams, who said to him:

"Go right up to the parlor. She is sitting in the big rocking-chair."

He went upstairs, and as he entered the ladies' parlor he saw a fair, pale-faced lady seated in a large arm-chair and well wrapped up. He removed his hat, bowed and stood before her. She looked up at him in silent admiration for a couple of minutes, and then said:

"I am glad to see you. It is hard for me to believe that you are only sixteen years old. Sit down and let me tell you how grateful I am to you for saving my life the other day."

"Please don't do that, ma'am," he said, "because I only did my duty as a fireman then."

"Yes, so you did, but I am none the less grateful on that account. But for your manly performance of duty I would not be alive to-day. Did you know that the detectives and the chief of the fire department have declared that the fire was the work of an incendiary?"

"Yes, ma'am, I have heard that," he replied.

"It is an awful crime to endanger the lives of people that way."

"It is, indeed."

"Mr. Bayne, I wish to ask you some questions about what happened when you took me out of my room to save me from a horrible death. Will you tell me all you know about it?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"You met my husband in the corridor just a few steps from our room door. I heard his voice telling you to hurry out as the stairs was ablaze. Then you fell down, did you not?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"How came you to fall?"

"My feet were knocked from under me by your husband."

"You are sure of that?"

"I am as sure of it as I am that I am now sitting here before you," he answered.

"What did he do then?"

"He tore you from my arms and disappeared in the smoke in the corridor."

"Where did you find me next?"

"At the head of the stairs. I stumbled over you."

"And you took me up again and brought me out?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Did my husband ever say anything about it to you afterward?"

"Yes, ma'am. He came to the headquarters of our fire company and thanked me, thrust a purse in my hand and went away."

"What was in the purse?"

"One hundred dollars."

"Now tell me why you did not come to see me the other day?"

"I did call, but Mr. Bosworth met me at the head of the stairs, and said that I could not see you."

"He did?" and her eyes flashed as she asked the question.

"Yes, ma'am."

"What did he say?"

"I—I—don't think I ought to tell you that, ma'am."

"Tell me everything. I must hear all. What did he say?"

"He said that you were out of your head, and that if I attempted to see you it would be at the peril of my life."

She looked at the young fireman with her great brown eyes opened to their widest extent, whilst her already very pale face assumed an ashen hue.

"You went away after that," she said, "believing what he told you?"

"Yes, ma'am, I believed it till I told Dr. Williams about it. Then he told me that you were no more out of your head than he or I were."

"And he was right. The doctor tells me that

your father was injured for life whilst trying to save life and property at a fire?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"And that you are the only support of the family?"

"Yes, ma'am, but just now it is no support at all, as I am out of employment."

"What is your father's name?"

"William Bayne."

"And your mother's?"

"Mary Bayne."

"And yours?"

"Walter Bayne."

"And you have a little sister, have you not?"

"Yes, ma'am. Her name is Nellie, ten years old."

Mrs. Bosworth wrote down their names with a pencil, and then said:

"Please don't say anything about what I have said to you. Dr. Williams said enough to me to cause me to ask you the questions that you have just answered. If we never meet again in this world, rest assured that, my father and mother excepted, my deepest gratitude goes out to you. I shall never cease to think of you as the brave young fireman—though but a boy in years—who saved my life after my husband had left me to perish. You must go now, for my husband may return at any moment."

She extended her hand to him, and he took it, bowed low, and left the hotel as quietly as he had entered it.

Just after he left the hotel he met Mr. Elliott, the real estate man, who told him that Mr. Trainor had sent for him and asked him to sell the mortgage for him, as he did not wish to hold it. He suggested to Walter to find somebody to take it over. Walter told him he would see what he could do in the matter and shortly left Mr. Elliott. Going a short ways further, he met Mr. Wyckoff. Walter told him about the mortgage and Mr. Wyckoff surprised the boy by asking him to call the next day and he would give him a check for the amount, and that he would consider it as a present for saving his daughter's life. Of course Walter at first refused to accept it for that purpose, but Mr. Wyckoff insisted, so the boy told him he would accept it as a debt of honor. Walter went home in delight.

He said nothing to his mother about it, but she asked him to go out and see if he could catch some fish for supper. It was a bright moonlight night, and Walter's father saw him gain the rock and a few minutes later he saw the dark forms of two men go toward the rock, and thought they were going to help Walter fish. Then Nellie came into the room and engaged his attention for a while, and when he looked out again only one figure remained on the rock and he shortly left it. Will Bayne was alarmed and called his wife. She came in. "A man has just left the rock where Walter was fishing, and I don't see Walter. Run out and see who he is."

CHAPTER IX.—The Attack on the Rock.

Mary Bayne was a brave woman in every sense of the world. She did not hesitate a single moment after hearing her husband's words, but

darted out of the house without even stopping to put on a bonnet or shawl. Out through the front gate she sped, and then round the corner of the lot and toward the river bank. She saw a man returning from the water's edge and running up to him, saw that he was a stranger.

"Who are you?" she demanded, clutching hold of his arm with a firm grasp.

The man did not make any reply, but tried to shake himself loose from her. She held on all the closer. Then he turned upon her and gave her a blow that sent her reeling backward till she fell all in a heap, with a thousand stars flashing before her eyes. When she came to she was too much dazed for some minutes to exactly realize what had happened to her. But she gradually recalled the whole business, and then her heart almost paralyzed with fear for Walter. She arose, went down to the river's edge and made her way out to the rock where Walter had gone to fish on leaving the house. There she saw Walter's pole lying on the rock, but nothing else. Then she hurried back to the house and told her husband what had happened to her and what she had seen on the rock.

"Good Heavens!" exclaimed Will Bayne. "Something has happened to Walter. You must run to the police station and tell them what has happened. Go quick!"

She was so unnerved that she could scarcely walk, and as she left the house she grew weaker every moment. When less than one hundred yards from the gate she sank down on the ground utterly overcome. Everything was turning around with her, and she was on the verge of swooning when she heard Walter's voice say:

"Mother! Mother! What's the matter?" and the next moment felt herself lifted in his arms.

"Walter! Walter!" she gasped. "You are alive!"

"Yes, mother, but wet through and through. What were you doing out here in the night air and lying on the ground?"

"I was going to tell the police that you were in the river and——"

"Why, don't you know that I am as hard to drown as any fish in the river?"

"Oh, I am so glad you are safe again. Who was the man on the rock with you?"

"He was an acquaintance. Why do you ask?"

"Because when I asked him who he was he turned and knocked me down."

"What! Knocked you down!"

"Yes—knocked me senseless."

"My God!" Walter gasped. "What does it mean?"

"Who is he?"

"I'll tell you when I see him to-morrow, mother," and then he led her into the house, where he told his father that he was all right save for the ducking he had received.

"But how came you to fall into the water?" his father asked.

"Oh, that was an easy thing to do," replied Walter, laughing. "I'll try it over again, and see if I can't get a good mess of fish for your breakfast," and to avoid answering the questions which they were putting to him, he hastened away to the river to try his luck at fishing again.

Out of hearing of his parents, Walter talked to and reasoned with himself incessantly.

"He was slipping up on me when I happened to look around and saw him. Then he spoke pleasantly, and asked me what luck I was having. Something told me that he had followed me there for no good purpose. I thought maybe he had heard of my call at the hotel, and that he had come to see me about it. Lucky for me that I rose up to talk with him. When he began to question me about my visit to the hotel I saw that he had come for a fight, and there I was unarmed and at his mercy. At last, when he drew his dagger and struck at me, I slipped off the rock into the water and left him there all alone. He is the only man who ever made me 'take water,' and I was glad enough to do it. But I'll face him to-morrow and show him that I am able to avenge a blow given to my mother. He came here to kill me, I believe, and had I not slipped into the water, where he dared not follow me, he would have done so. I believe that he is the very same man who shot at me the other night, but what in thunder he wanted to do it for puzzles me. One day he gives me one hundred dollars for saving his wife from fire, and the next tries to shoot me. Then he told me a big lie about his wife being crazy, and told me I could not see her. Now he comes at me with a dagger. I'll be ready for him next time, or my name is not Walter Bayne!"

Walter reached the rock which he had so suddenly left an hour before, and pulled the plank away with him so that no one could join him without his knowledge or consent. Then he went to work and caught three very fine fish, with which he returned to the house.

"We have enough to give us two meals at least," he said to his mother, "and I am quite sure that I can manage to provide bread in some way."

Mrs. Bayne had retired, feeling very much prostrated over the shock of the blow she had received. When she arose the next morning both her eyes were in mourning, showing that she had received a very hard blow. Walter's blood boiled with indignation when he saw her face, and he said:

"If you were struck by the man who was on the rock with me last night, mother, I'll make him pay dearly for it."

"Don't go and get into trouble about it, Walter," she said.

"I'll keep the law on my side," he remarked. "I'll go and attend to the mortgage first and bring it home. Then I'll go and see about that blow."

She gave him the hundred dollars which Bosworth had given him, and with that in his pocket he called at the mill where Wyckoff worked, and got the check which the fire chief had waiting for him. With that he went to Elliott's office and said:

"I have the money for that mortgage. Let me have it," and he produced the check and money.

The transfer was made, and the real estate man said:

"You are entitled to the benefit of the discount, which is seven dollars," and handed that amount back to him.

"I am glad to hear that," said Walter, placing the money back into his pocket.

He hastened back home to place the canceled mortgage in his father's hands, and give his mother the seven dollars discount.

That done he saw them happier than at any time since the terrible mishap to his father. Then he left the house to go in quest of Mr. Bosworth. On the way uptown he met two of the Hook and Ladder boys.

"I say, fellows," he said to them, "a man tried to get away with me last night, and I had to take water because I had no weapons. I want to borrow a gun and call on him."

"I haven't any with me," said one of the two.

"Nor have I," said the other.

"Well, I'll tackle him without one, then."

"Who is it?"

"Never mind. I won't call any names," and he left them.

At the hotel he stood around till he saw Bosworth come downstairs, and then started toward him. Bosworth saw him and turned pale as death, but quickly reached around to his pistol pocket for his weapon as Walter sprang at him like a tiger.

CHAPTER X.—Unraveling the Mystery.

Ere Walter could reach him Bosworth drew a knife and made a desperate lunge at him with it. But the young fireman parried the thrust, caught him by the wrist with his left hand, and dealt him a blow with the other that sent him reeling back against the bottom of the stairs. It was done in about ten seconds, and then a half-dozen guests of the house ran up to separate them.

"Out of my way!" hissed Bosworth, flourishing his danger menacingly. "I'll kill him! Out of my way!"

Seeing the dagger in his hand they gave him a wide berth, and he rushed at Walter again.

The horrified guests expected to see the young fireman slain there and then, whilst they were powerless to prevent it. But in another moment they saw the youth strike out from the shoulder and the dagger went flying toward the ceiling whilst its owner staggered backward and then went down in a heap. Then the bystanders rushed in and secured both men to prevent any further collisions. Bosworth was fairly dazed by the terrific blow he had received. Walter was strong, quick and indignant, and he had put all his force in the blow, which landed full between the man's eyes.

"What's it all about?" one full-bearded man asked.

"What do you mean by coming in here and attacking one of my guests?" the landlord asked.

"Your guest is a coward and a scoundrel, besides being a would-be assassin."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean just what I say—that your guest Bosworth tried to kill me last night with that very dagger."

"It is false!" exclaimed Bosworth. "You attacked me, and but for the danger you would have murdered me!"

Walter was dumfounded at the unexpected accusation, and for the moment was unable to make any reply.

"Where did that occur?" one of the party asked, turning to Bosworth.

"Down on Main street."

"Ah?" ejaculated Walter. "I'll prove him to be a liar now. The moon was shining very bright last night, and I went out on the rocks in the river back of our house to catch some fish for breakfast this morning. To reach a big boulder I had to make a bridge with a plank some ten feet long. I was seated on that rock, when he came up behind me. The roaring of the water over the rocks drowned his footsteps, and had I not happened to look round he would have been able to kill me then and there. As it was, I sprang up and confronted him. After a few words he drew his blade and rushed at me. I saved myself by slipping off the rock and disappearing from his sight, and by dint of hard swimming caught on to rocks below. My father saw us both on the rock from his bedroom window, and when he missed one of the two dark figures there he sent my mother out to see what had happened. She ran out, met Bosworth coming away, took hold of his arm and demanded to know who he was. He brutally struck her to the ground, and ran away. She bears the marks of the blow in her face this morning. I came here unarmed to see him about it, and the moment he saw me he drew that dagger again. Turn him loose now and let me have a chance at the cowardly assassin!"

The young fireman's story, told in a very dramatic manner, created a sensation among those who heard it.

"It is false in every particular," said Bosworth. "The young villain met me, and, after a few words, attacked me like a tiger, and I defended myself so well that he took to his heels. He came here to-day to blackmail me."

"My father and mother can corroborate my story. Any man who knows my father would believe him against all the world," and Walter Bayne's face seemed to blaze with pride as he spoke, "and," he added, "no honest man will say that I ever told him a lie."

By this time a large crowd had gathered in the hotel. The proprietor undertook to put Walter out, but the crowd knew the brave young fireman, and believed his story as against the story of the man whom they did not know, and would not let him be put out. Then the landlord sent for the police. They came, and the crowd had to retire from the hotel. But they did not make any arrests. Walter met some of the members of Hook and Ladder No. 1, and when they heard his story they insisted on his going before a justice and swearing out a warrant against Bosworth.

"I'd rather give him a good, old-fashioned thrashing," he said to them.

"But there is a law which says you shall not do that," said a young man in the party. "Don't get out from behind the law yourself. Swear out a warrant for his arrest, and you can land him in State's prison, where he belongs."

So he went before a justice and swore out a warrant, which was placed in a constable's hands for execution. The officer went to the hotel to

make the arrest, but Bosworth could not be found. He waited there for him, and when night came on he was still there, but no Bosworth did he see.

"Guess he has skipped," said one of the Hook and Ladder boys, when he heard that he had not been seen.

"If he has," said Walter, "I am very sorry, for I want to have a chance at him for striking my mother."

"If he has skipped," said another, "it is an acknowledgment of the truth of your accusation against him."

"Yes, but it does not give me the satisfaction I want," replied Walter.

In the evening the chief of the fire department came to Walter, and taking him aside, said:

"That man ought to have been your best friend. What has passed between you to make him your enemy?"

"It is something singular," replied Walter, "and has puzzled me ever since it occurred," and he then related his first meeting with Bosworth on the day of the fire in the hotel.

"He tripped you up, seized his wife, and then left her where the fire was hottest?" the chief gasped in dumfounded amazement.

"Yes—I stumbled over her as I was making my way out and took her up again."

"Yes. He wore a big black mustache then, but when he came to see me in the evening his mustache was shaved off."

"Well, well! I wish I had known that sooner. Is that all you know about it?"

"I have a suspicion on my mind that he tried to kill me on the very night following the fire."

"How?"

"By shooting at me in the dark as I was going home."

"Why, I never heard of that."

"I didn't say anything about it, but it is known to Mr. Baker, who came very near stopping the bullet away over on the other side of the street, for he hollered over to know what I was shooting at. Then he came over to where I was, and I told him somebody had fired off a pistol almost in my face, and then took to his heels."

"Why have you kept that a secret till now?" Fire Chief Wyckoff asked.

"For my mother's sake. I knew how it would worry her."

"Well, maybe you did right after all. I think I can see through the whole business now, Walter."

"Well, what is it?"

"You must keep it a profound secret. You know it has been found that the fire was an incendiary one?"

"Yes."

"Well, I am quite sure now that Bosworth was the incendiary."

"Oh, that can't be!" exclaimed Walter. "What object could a rich man like him have in setting the hotel on fire?"

"To kill his wife!" replied the chief.

Walter started as if stung. He remembered the sweet face of the invalid lady, and wondered if anyone could be so fiendish as to want to harm even a hair of her head.

"Mr. Wyckoff," he said, after a silence of a

minute or two, "I can't believe such a thing as that. How do you reason it out?"

"She is an invalid, and, therefore of great expense and anxiety to him. He set the hotel on fire to cover up his crime, locked his wife's room door and left her to her fate. On seeing you go to her rescue he rushed up, told you to hurry, tripped you up, snatched her out of your arms and dropped her where she would be sure to perish, and hastened to save himself. Luckily for her, you stumbled over her again and brought her safely out."

"But he came to me that very evening, and gave me a purse of \$100 as a token of gratitude for saving her life."

"That was simply a blind, my dear boy," replied the chief. "He is a rich man, and knew that people would wonder and make remarks if he did not do something of the kind. He cut off his mustache in the hope of deceiving you so that you could not recognize him. He undoubtedly shot at you for fear that you might tell about the tripping-up business. Then the attempt on you last night makes that as plain as a nose on a man's face."

"I can hardly believe it, chief," said Walter.

"How have you accounted for the two attempts to kill you, then?"

"I have never thought that he was the one who shot at me till to-day, and the attempt last night I attributed to his having heard that I went to the hotel to see his wife after he had told me that I should not do so."

"Did he tell you not to see her?"

"Oh, yes," and then Walter related the incident of the meeting at the top of the stairs, when Bosworth told him that Mrs. Bosworth was insane, and that he should not see her.

"There! He did not want to say anything to her to arouse her suspicions, or to have her ask any questions. Did she ask you any questions about the fire when you did see her?"

"Yes, and I am sure that she suspected that something was wrong."

"Well, then, that's why he made up his mind to settle you before any investigation could take place. With you out of the way, suspicion would not point in his direction. Walter, I am going to get at the bottom of this thing. I shall get a week's leave from the mill and give my whole time to looking into the thing. The detective who is engaged to ferret out the incendiary thinks one of the servants set fire to the place, but I am satisfied that he is wrong."

Walter gave due thought to what the chief imparted to him, but he could not see how it was possible that Bosworth could be guilty of all the villainy that he was accused of.

A few days later a fire broke out in a work shop next to a tenement. It soon became a roaring furnace. Then the tenement caught fire and Walter Bayne went into the building. Suddenly a pistol shot was heard, and Wyckoff dashed into the building in search of Walter. In a little while the chief emerged with Walter in his arms, unconscious. He had a bad scalp wound on his head, where a shot had grazed it. Walter was laid up in bed for several days, attended by Dr. Williams.

CHAPTER XI.—The Chief of Police and the Lady.

On hearing that Dr. Williams had pronounced the wound on Walter's head a bullet wound, the chief of police called on him and asked about it.

"Yes," said the doctor, "it was made by a bullet and nothing else."

"I understand that a shot was heard in the burning building," said the official, "but that is the case in most fires where guns and pistols are among the things destroyed by fire. Does Bayne say that he saw anybody shoot at him?"

"No. He said that he remembers hearing the shot behind him, and of his falling to the floor, and beyond that he knows nothing more."

"Well, I'll set a detective to looking for some clue to it, though it looks as if it would be useless to do so."

"Yes, it would seem so."

The chief of police began an investigation to learn whether or not anyone was seen to leave the building after the pistol shot was heard. He began with the firemen, asking every one who was present at the fire in turn. But none of them saw anybody come out of the burning building save the chief of the fire department when he brought Walter out. Then he began to inquire of those who were in the rear of the house when it was burning, and learned that nobody had left the premises on that side after the pistol shot was heard.

"Then he must have perished in the fire," said the police official. "The fire was in full blast when the shot was fired, and he may have fallen a victim to it. I'll have the ashes raked over to see whether or not any charred bones could be found."

It required two days to cool the ashes so that men could work in them. They found the charred bones of a child, also those of a grown person and a badly burned pistol. Of course, identification of the bones was out of the question, but the chief of police had the ashes sifted most carefully till every little thing that would throw any light on the matter was carefully examined.

At last a diamond was found. The heat had damaged it but very little.

"That's what I was looking for," said the chief, as he took the precious stone in his hand. "I am now satisfied that the man who fired that shot at Walter Bayne is dead, and that this was worn by him."

"Who was he?" a citizen asked.

"Wait a bit, and maybe I'll tell you."

He went back to his headquarters, and then prepared for a visit to Mrs. Bosworth, to whom he sent up his card at the hotel where she was living. She was wrapped in shawls, and seated in an arm-chair when he was shown in.

"Madam," he said, making her a very profound bow, "I am the chief of police of this city, and have come to ask if you know where your husband is?"

"No," she replied, "I don't know where he is."

"Do you know if this diamond is like the one he wore," and he handed her the diamond which had been fished out of the ashes of the late fire. She took and looked at it.

"I really cannot say," she replied, after a

silence of some minutes. "I never saw the diamond he wore out of the setting, and would hardly know it. Why do you ask me that?"

"Because it was found in the ashes of the last fire."

"Was he present at that fire?"

"No one knows. We are trying to find out if he was."

"I have not seen him since the day he had the trouble with that young fireman. I don't think he has been in Mill Dale since that day."

"Did he leave the town that day?"

"I don't know. I have not seen him since that day."

"You cannot identify that diamond?"

"No, sir, not out of the setting, if it was his. Why do you think it is my husband's diamond?"

"Someone said that it resembled the one he wore, and I am trying to find out who was burned up in that fire night before last."

"I am quite sure that he was not in Mill Dale on that evening," said the invalid lady.

"Yet you cannot say where he was at that time?"

"No, not with any certainty."

"You don't believe that he has been lost in the fire, though?"

"No, I have no reason to think so," she replied.

"You do not seem to be in any way uneasy about him?"

"I am not of a very emotional nature," she said. "Yet I would be very sorry to hear of anyone dying such a horrible death. It must be the most painful death one can die. Can you tell me if young Bayne is out of danger? He saved my life once, you know, and hence I am very much interested in his welfare."

"Yes, so he did. He is a young hero. I believe the doctors have said that he was out of danger, though badly hurt."

"Ah, I am very glad to hear that. I was told yesterday that he was not expected to live."

"He will be out again in a week or so. He was hurt on the head and bruised in a few places. Firemen don't mind such things. They are used to them, you know."

The chief received back the diamond and stowed it away in his vest pocket. Taking up his hat, he turned to Mrs. Bosworth again, and asked:

"You are sure, are you, that this stone was not the one your husband wore?"

"No, I am not sure, for I cannot recognize it out of its setting. It may and yet may not have been his."

He made a profound bow to her and withdrew.

"She is a puzzle to me," said the chief to himself. "She doesn't seem to care two cents what has become of her husband. On the contrary, she is utterly indifferent about it."

On reaching his office the chief saw a note on his desk, which read:

"Dear Chief.—Come and see me at once. Something to tell you.—Walter Bayne."

"I wonder what he wants," the chief said, looking at his watch. "I'll take the time to go and see him later in the evening."

When he called, the chief found the young fireman sitting up in bed, and well able to talk.

"I am glad to see you, chief," Walter said.

"Since I've had my head to feel all right, again, I've been thinking that the man who fired that shot at me from behind perished in the fire."

"Why do you think so?"

"Because I made the escape from the very spot where the floor was sinking under me just a moment before, and as the shot came I heard a voice say in desperate tones:

"I am lost."

"Why have you not said anything about it before?"

"Because my head hurt me so that I could not think of everything that took place."

"Well, you want to do some more thinking. We have found the charred remains of a man in the ashes, and this diamond."

Bayne took the diamond, and looked at it.

"It looks like Bosworth's," he said.

"Yes, and we also found a revolver with the woodwork all burned away."

"Did you find a knife?"

"No."

"He had a clasp-knife. See if you can find it, and that will settle the question as to whether he was Bosworth."

The chief went back to his quarters, and was there told by one of the firemen that a gunsmith had repaired a revolver for Bosworth a few days before, and that he thought he would know if the one found in the ashes was the same one or not.

"Take it to him, then," said the chief.

A few minutes later a porter from the hotel dashed into the office and handed him a note. It was addressed to the chief of police, and the handwriting was that of a lady. He opened the note and read:

"Mrs. Bosworth would be pleased to have the chief of police call at the hotel at his earliest convenience on very important business."

That was all, but in view of what the chief heard her say that day he was moved to hurry off to the hotel at once. On arriving at the hotel the chief was shown up to the ladies' parlor, where he found the lady waiting for him.

She was white as a sheet, and her eyes flashed fire.

"Chief," she said, the moment he entered. "Arrest my husband and I will pay you \$1,000."

CHAPTER XII.—The Mystery of Bosworth's Fate.

The chief of police was dumfounded at her words. He gazed at her in silence for a minute or two, as if to give her a chance to say more. But she said nothing. She looked him full in the face in an expectant sort of way till he said:

"I have ordered the men on duty to look out for him. We want him for the attempt on the life of young Bayne."

"Tell the men that one thousand dollars will be paid to the one who arrests him," she added.

He bowed and said:

"Your wishes shall be attended to, madam."

"And when he is arrested send me word at once, so that I may see him."

He again bowed, and then asked:

"Will you be so kind as to inform me why you wish to have him arrested?"

"That you shall hear when I see him under arrest," she replied. "I will be responsible for the arrest, and my responsibility is worth a good deal, sir. I have a fortune in my own right."

The chief was about to leave her presence when she said:

"Keep my name in the background, please. Simply say the reward will be paid."

"Yes, madam," and he turned and left the parlor, wondering what had happened since he had seen the lady that morning.

Once more out on the street the chief said to himself:

"Something has happened to arouse the ire of the lady. Her eyes were blazing with wrath when she spoke to me. She has heard something or made some discovery since I saw her this morning. Can it be possible that she and her husband have separated? If so, it is of very recent date. Hello!"

He had run up against Dr. Williams, and the collision came near sending the man of medicine to the gutter.

"I beg your pardon, doctor," said the chief. "I didn't see you, though you feel like a very solid individual."

"Well, I flatter myself that I am," returned the doctor, laughing. "By the way, I have been twice to your office to see you, and each time you had just gone out. Mrs. Bosworth at the hotel wants to see you."

"I have just been to see her," said the chief.

"Oh, you have, eh? She told you what she wanted?"

"Yes."

"Well, what are you going to do about it?"

"I am going to do as she says."

"Did she tell you why she wanted him arrested?"

"No," and the chief looked hard at him as if waiting for him to say something more.

But the old doctor did not, and the chief asked:

"Do you know anything about it?"

"Perhaps I do professionally."

"Have they separated?"

"I think they have."

"It is a mystery to me."

"Yes, there is a good deal of mystery connected with it," remarked the doctor.

"Well, maybe his arrest will clear it all up. I hate mystery."

"Most people like it, I think," the doctor said, as he walked away.

The chief returned to his office, and sat down to think over the situation.

"She means business," he said, "and it's plain that he is in a bad way if the police should get hold of him. I only wish the lady had told me what she had against him. I suppose I'll find out when he is arrested. Lord, how her eyes flashed when she told me to arrest him! She is a woman who can hate with a vengeance."

Just as he was about to leave his office, the fireman who had taken the pistol found in the fire to the gunsmith came in and said:

"The gunsmith says that he will examine the pistol to-morrow and report to you."

"Very well," said the chief, "that will do just as well."

The fireman stood around as if he had some-

thing on his mind that troubled him. At last he said:

"I've got something to tell you, chief, but you must not give me away."

"Eh? What? No, I won't give you away. What is it?"

"The boys of the Hook and Ladder No. 1 are going to hang Bosworth if they can catch him."

"Jerusalem! Lynch law here in Mill Dale!"

"Yes, sir. They say he has now made two attempts on his life—Walter Bayne's—and now they are going to make one on his. If they catch him they'll hang him sure."

"Well, well," ejaculated the chief. "Are all of them in that racket?"

"The last one of them, sir; I told them that it was wrong, and they told me that it made no difference, so I thought that if you said a few words to them they might listen to you."

"Yes, yes, you are right. I will see them to-morrow evening."

"Don't give me away now," cautioned the fireman.

"No danger of that," said the chief. "The boys must not do any such thing as that, though. It would disgrace our little city. I'll drop in at their quarters to-morrow evening, and give them a quiet little talk about such foolishness as that."

The fireman went away, and the chief of police shut up and walked leisurely down the street toward his home.

"It seems that this is a very unhealthy place for Mr. Bosworth," said the chief to himself as he strolled along smoking a cigar. "His wife offers a thousand dollars for his arrest and the firemen of Hook and Ladder No. 1 offer to hang him as soon as he puts in an appearance. Really, I would not blame him if he gives the place a wide berth. It is a dangerous ground for him."

The next day a letter was sent to Walter's house telling him to report to Bidwell & Jones's place as soon as he could get around and they would give him steady work at good wages. It greatly buoyed up the boy's courage. That evening the chief visited the hook and ladder company and talked with the boys, telling them that the city council had voted Walter \$25 a month in recognition of his services as fireman and that his medical expenses were to be paid by them as well. The boys cheered the news.

CHAPTER XIII.—The Revelation of the Widow.

On the day following the incidents related in the preceding chapter, the gunsmith who had been examining the revolver found in the ashes of the last conflagration went to the chief of police to make his report.

"A few days before the fire," he said to the chief, Mr. Bosworth came to me with a revolver and asked me if I could put a stronger spring in the lock, as the one he had frequently failed to explode the cap. I told him I believed I could, as I had a great variety of such things in my shop. He left the weapon with me, and I repaired it as ordered. I am in the habit of placing a mark on every firearm that comes into my shop for repairs or work of any description. That mark is three little round holes about the

size of pin heads made by a hard-pointed punch and a sharp blow of a hammer. Well, I put that mark on Bosworth's pistol, and I have found them there on this one found in the ashes."

"But have you not placed that same mark on scores of other revolvers in Mill Dale?" the chief asked.

"Yes. But on his revolver I found another mark which I have never seen on any other—a filed cross under the bottom of the long barrel, about an inch from the muzzle."

"Do you find that mark on the burnt one?"

"Yes, very distinctly."

"And so you are sure that it is the one that you repaired for Bosworth?"

"I am positive that it is the one," he replied.

"See here, chief," said an officer, coming in. "Here is a knife which has just been found in the ashes where the pistol was found two days ago."

The chief took the burnt blades in his hands and looked at them.

"That was a clasp-knife," said the gunsmith the moment he saw the blade. "I have repaired many a one."

"You are sure of that, are you?"

"Yes, sir."

"Do you know that this settles the question of the fate of Bosworth?" the chief asked.

"No, I did not," said the gunsmith.

"Well, it does, and I am not sorry for it. It has been puzzling me for several days. It settles the question beyond a doubt."

"Did he have a clasp knife with him?"

"Yes. He drew it on Walter Bayne the day they had the fracas in the hotel. Walter never forgot the knife."

"Then I should say he was the man whose bones were found in the ashes."

"Undoubtedly."

When the gunsmith went away the chief of police sat down to think over the situation, which had now changed somewhat.

"Mrs. Bosworth will have to be informed of it," he said to himself, "and I am not sure that it is going to be a pleasant thing to do it. The bones of the dead man have all been gathered up—such as could be—and placed in a box. She will have to say what must be done with them."

The chief called at the hotel and sent up his card to the lady. She met him in the parlor, looking better than at any time since her arrival at the house.

"Madam," he said, "I have an unpleasant duty to perform. The fact has been fully established that your husband did perish in the fire the other day."

She turned slightly paler if possible, and sat down in an armchair.

"How has that fact been established?" she asked.

"A knife and pistol, belonging to him, have been identified by the gunsmith, who repaired the firearm for him only a few days before the fire. I have no longer a shadow of doubt about it, madam," said the chief, "and now have to ask what disposition you wish made of the charred remains."

"Have them buried decently, and send the bill to me."

"Have you no other orders to give?"

"No, sir."

He arose and was about to leave, when she asked him to sit down again. He did so, and she said:

"I think it proper to make an explanation to you. I have been married seven years, and have a very large fortune in my own right. I never had a child, and two years ago my husband induced me to make a will, leaving him the bulk of my fortune. Soon after that my health began to decline, and we traveled to various sections, hoping the change of air and water would benefit me. I grew worse all the time, until I was a mere wreck.

"At last we came here, and the fire at the hotel occurred. For the first time I suspected my husband of trying to encompass my death, and after hearing young Bayne's story I was sure of it. I began to investigate and soon discovered that he was slowly drugging me to death. When I made that discovery and obtained the fullest proof of it I offered the reward for his arrest. But in his eagerness to put young Bayne out of the way as a witness he has lost his own life. My health has steadily improved since the day of the last fire, and not the least doubt remains that I will fully recover my health. You can now fully understand why I offered that reward, and you are at liberty to give the explanation to the public if you think it necessary to do so. I shall remain here till my health is fully restored, as I have received so much sympathy from the guests of this house."

"Madam, your story astounds me!" cried the chief.

"I am not surprised at that," she replied. "It utterly dumfounded me when I discovered the truth. I have not the least regret for the fate that overtook him. The shame of being the widow of such a man is mine, but I can bear it now that I am free from him."

"Let me express the hope that you may entirely recover your health, and that you may live to be as happy as you could wish to be."

"Thanks, sir. I wish you all the happiness one can enjoy in this life."

The chief went away to give orders for the burial of Bosworth's remains in accordance with her instructions. Her story soon reached the public and created an immense sensation, and as Walter Bayne was more or less connected with it he came in for a vast amount of congratulations. A few days later found Walter at work in the store of Bidwell & Jones, having recovered sufficiently to enable him to attend to business. In the store as a clerk was a young man whose father was one of the heavy stockholders of the mill of which Mr. Trainor had been superintendent. His father was very bitter against Walter, believing that Walter had caused the strike and that the strikers set the mill on fire.

"Are you going to work here?" the young man asked him.

"Yes," was the reply.

"Then I'll leave!"

Of course Walter was taken by surprise by such an announcement and asked who the young man was. He was told his name was 'Dolph Widmer. That his father owned about one-third of the mill. Walter clung on to his position in

the store and young Widmer left. Two of his cousins also left the hook and ladder company.

A month later Wyckoff resigned as chief of the fire department and Walter was elected chief in his place. Mrs. Bosworth in the meantime had purchased a considerable amount of property and had placed Walter in charge of it. Hence his time was more taken up than formerly.

CHAPTER XIV.—The Widow's Request.

Time rolled on, and the youth who was a fireman at sixteen was still a fireman at twenty-one, and considered a veteran. On his twenty-first birthday he resigned the position of chief of the fire department, and re-entered the ranks of Hook and Ladder No. 1 as a private. All the firemen protested.

"No," he said, firmly, "I won't take it again. There are other young men among the firemen of Mill Dale who deserve promotion by reason of gallant service. Give them a show. Let them see that valor is sure to be rewarded. There are a dozen or more youths who have saved lives from the flames. Elect one of them chief and thus encourage the boys."

"That is the most sensible advice I've heard for years," said the mayor, "and I hope the firemen of Mill Dale will follow it both in letter and spirit."

Quick to respond to the suggestion of the ex-chief, the members of Hook and Ladder No. 1 nominated Gus Trainor, a youth of nineteen, who had saved four lives at fires, for the position. He was a son of Mr. Trainor, the mill superintendent, who was once a bitter enemy of Walter's. Two other young men, who were yet under twenty-one years of age, and who had saved lives at conflagrations, were put up as candidates, and a general rivalry ensued. Gus was elected, and a hearty support was given him after he took the office.

Only a few weeks after he returned to the ranks as a private Walter was called up out of bed by the ringing of the huge fire-bell. He was quick to respond, and reached the hook and ladder house just as the truck was leaving. The boys gave him a cheer of welcome as he seized hold of the rope and darted off with them. The main hotel of the city was on fire, and the guests, suddenly awakened from sound slumbers, were running here and there, blinded by smoke which filled the corridors, in vain endeavors to get out of danger.

Walter Bayne was horrified when he reached the spot and found the big hotel wrapt in flames, and remembered that Mrs. Bosworth's suite of rooms were on the second floor. His first thought was of her, and he dashed into the burning building and darted up the flight of stairs to her apartments. He could have reached the door blindfolded, and even he might as well have been blindfolded, for he was forced by the smoke to shut his eyes tightly. He reached the door, and found it locked. Throwing himself against it with all his weight, he burst it open, and found the widow but half dressed, and so thoroughly frightened that she did not know what to do.

"Oh, Walter!" she cried. "Save me! Save me from the fire!"

"Keep cool, then, and hurry on a dress," he returned. "I will save you or die with you."

She hastily threw on a wrapper, and turning to him said:

"I am ready now."

"Where are your jewels?" he asked.

She ran to the bureau, and took therefrom a jewel-case.

"Hold to it," he said, and then running to the bed, he snatched a pair of blankets off of it, spread them on the floor and said:

"Lie down on those, and let me roll you up in them."

She did so, and he rolled her over and over till the length of the two blankets were wrapped around her. Then he took her up in his arms and dashed through the corridors now black with smoke and passed down the stairs and out to the street with her. When he reached the street with her the blankets were on fire in three places, and the horsemen dashed a stream of water over her. Mrs. Bosworth was taken to a private house near by, where she was unrolled from the blankets, half dead from suffocation. All her wardrobe was lost in the fire, but she had been wise enough to have it insured for two-thirds its value.

Nearly every member of old Hook and Ladder No. 1 saved one or more lives, and the next day the papers teemed with accounts of deeds of daring among the brave fellows. The new chief of the fire department worked like a beaver and showed that he was competent in every respect to hold the position to which he had been elected. A few days after the fire Mrs. Bosworth sent for Walter and said:

"I am going to build a fire-proof hotel on the site of the old one, if the owners of the lot will sell at a reasonable figure, I am tired of being burnt out so often. See the owners at once and let me know if they will sell."

Two hours later Walter reported to her that she could have the lot at a certain figure. She immediately wrote a check for the amount and gave it to him, saying:

"Secure it at once and set workmen to clearing away the debris. Then get the best architects to draw plans for a first-class, fire-proof hotel with 250 rooms. Probably you won't have to risk your life the third time to save mine if I get into a fire-proof house like that."

"You can rest assured that I do not consider it a task to risk my life to save yours," he replied. "You have done enough for me and mine to warrant me in laying down my life for you whenever the necessity for doing so shall come."

"I don't want such a necessity to come, Walter," she replied. "It's the very thing I am trying to provide against. I want you to live for me. You understand?"

"Ah! I shall be a happy man in living to serve you," he said. "What do we not owe to your generosity!"

"Not half as much as I owe you," said she. "The wealth of the world cannot pay for a life."

"I cannot deny that, and yet I——"

"Walter, go and secure the site of the hotel and then come back to me," she said, interrupting him.

He went away to attend to the business, for he was now her sole business agent, and never failed to be prompt in even the most minute matter. He called on her the next day with the title deeds to the land, and then she gave orders for an architect to draw plans to be submitted. In a week's time a plan had been adopted and work commenced. The people of Mill Dale were astonished at the rapidity with which the work progressed. In six month's time the big hotel was finished, furnished, and formally opened as the

WALTER BAYNE HOUSE.

"You are honoring me too much. People will talk about it, you know."

"And what will they say?"

"They will say that, as your business agent, I had it done, and that you, because I traded on your gratitude, yielded to the idea."

She looked him in the face and said:

"Walter Bayne, you once said that I could not ask of you anything you would refuse, did you not?"

"Yes, ma'am," he replied, "and I repeat it again."

"Then I am going to ask you to make me your wife. Will you refuse me that request?"

"No," said Walter, almost out of breath with joy. "I have wished it a thousand times, but hadn't the courage to propose."

CHAPTER XV.—Conclusion.

When Walter Bayne returned home that evening he was so happy and light-hearted that he felt as if he were walking on air. He looked back five years to the time when he was a penniless youth of sixteen, with an invalid father, a mother and little sister to take care of. He thought of the many perils through which he passed and the lives he had saved, and then looked at his present surroundings. To cap all that, he was now engaged to the richest woman in the State, and as her husband would be looked upon as the richest man in Mill Dale. She was the only individual who was the exclusive owner of a big mill and was now the owner of the finest hotel in the place, besides whole blocks of other houses. No wonder he felt like one in a dream as he wended his way home that evening. But his happiness was not of a mercenary character, for he had grown to love the beautiful widow with the deepest devotion of his heart. True, she was about eight years older than he, but neither of them thought anything of that. As for the widow, she had loved him from the day she gave him charge of her estate, and had long promised herself that if he did not ask her to be his wife, she would ask him to be her husband, and at last, when leap year came, she did so, fully satisfied that he loved her, but was afraid to propose to her.

"Mother," he said that evening as they sat in their little parlor, "what do you think the name of the new hotel is? They put up the sign to-day."

"I am sure I don't know," she replied. "What is it?"

"They call it the Walter Bayne House."

"Goodness sakes alive!" exclaimed the proud mother. "When will that woman's gratitude stop?"

"That's what I have often asked myself," he remarked. "I tried to dissuade her from doing that, but she laughed at me. She is going to live there, too, and call herself Mrs. Walter Bayne!"

"Good Lord!" gasped Mrs. Bayne. "Is the woman gone crazy?"

"Oh, no! I am going to live there, too—after we are married."

"Married!"

"Yes, mother. I am going to marry the Widow Bosworth."

His parents were dumfounded at the news, and then they rejoiced and congratulated him.

"Don't say a word about it yet a while," he said, "for we are going to wait till her birthday comes around in December."

It was a big secret for them to keep, but they kept it. In the meantime Walter remained a member of Hook and Ladder No. 1, and his popularity was such that when the firemen nominated him as their candidate for mayor of Mill Dale he was elected over the candidates of both the old political parties. Everybody was his friend, and when he was sworn in as mayor the firemen paraded the streets, and the mill hands all took a holiday. Soon after his inauguration as mayor the engagement between himself and the rich widow was made public. It created a stir in the highest circles of the city, and great preparations for the event were made. They were to be married in church, and the members of Hook and Ladder No. 1 begged that they be allowed to make the truck a chariot of roses and pull them to and from the church whilst seated upon it. The widow granted the request, and with four-and-twenty little bridesmaids surrounding the bridal coach, the brave firemen dragged him to the church door, escorted by all the other firemen in the city in full uniform. Every shop in the city was closed, and the operatives turned out to do honor to the gallant fireman and his bride. They were cheered from the beginning to the end of the line of the procession. When the ceremony was over at the church, the happy couple were escorted back to the hotel amid the ringing of bells, the cheers of the firemen and the waving of handkerchiefs all along the route. The firemen sat down to a sumptuous feast in the great dining-room of the hotel, where they ate and drank the health and happiness of the couple. Thus ends the story of the daring young fireman, who began battling with flames at the age of sixteen years, and his career attests the truth of the saying, that "Courage and truth ever reward those who possess them."

Next week's issue will contain "ONE HUNDRED FEET ABOVE THE HOUSETOPS; or, THE MYSTERY OF THE OLD CHURCH STEEPLE."

FINDS \$5,680 IN OLD PAPER

A man emptying waste paper from a basket on the pier at Old Orchard, Me., found a long black pocketbook containing \$5,680 in checks, cash and notes, and bearing the name of Edgar E. Rhodes. Mr. Rhodes, who conducts a studio at Old Orchard, explained that he missed the pocketbook. It is supposed he laid it on a shelf in his shop and it was brushed into the basket.

GLASS FOR FOOTBALLS

A new kind of glass, which, if not actually unbreakable, is so tough that it has been blown into a hollow sphere and kicked about as a football without breakage, has been discovered by Dr. Horak, a Czech engineer and inventor. When used in the form of tumblers the glass has successfully withstood the squirting of cold water immediately after being heated to a point where pieces of paper in the tumbler were charred. While the inventor does not claim that he has found the secret of unbreakable glass, he does believe he has found a way to make it possess the greatest resisting power of any glass so far known. It is admirably suited to the making of thermos bottles, which in so many cases have been too fragile.

THE LOUDEST VOICED BIRD

What is said to be the loudest voiced bird in the world is the bell bird, which is found in both South America and Africa. The naturalist, Waterton, says of this bird, which is also called the Campanero, "Its song is loud and clear like the note of a bell and is audible at a distance of five kilometers. No song or sound of any other feathered forest dweller rouses so much wonder as the 'tolling' of the Campanero. A single stroke of the bell is heard and these notes follow each other at intervals of about a minute."

The bell bird is pure white in color and about the size of an ordinary pigeon. Its head is adorned (or disfigured) by a singular horny excrescence, which is lifted for a distance about seven centimeters, while the bird is singing. It is this movable horny structure which is connected with the roof of the mouth which provides the resonance which enables the bird to produce its singular bell-like note. Every one who hears its remarkable tone for the first time is convinced that it must proceed from some neighboring church tower or campanile. It is a curious fact that the bird utters its song only when other voices are silent.

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AROUND THE WORLD IN THIRTY-THREE DAYS

By WILLIAM WADE

(A SERIAL STORY)

He was known as Foxy Wilmot, and was said to know more family secrets than people generally cared to have known, and was therefore both feared and hated, Dick having heard him spoken of as a blackmailer, although he had no personal knowledge that he was.

Horace Ildone, said to have a lot of money and to be sought after in society, was not known to Dick, although he attracted the young man's attention on account of his devotion to Miss Imogen Jollife, a well-known actress, who sat on his right, the lady having been asked on account of her great popularity.

The third man was a dissipated young fellow who was said to have gone through several fortunes, but who was always asked to dinner on account of his wit and his ability to sing or impersonate all the actors and musical people of the day in a most inimitable style.

His name was Hal Brittmor, and Dick had always avoided him on account of his dissipation and from being such a noted spendthrift.

The young detective found both him and Horace Ildone looking black at Foxy Wilmot more than once, although there was no open rupture between them, the greatest harmony prevailing, on the contrary.

It was after eight o'clock when the dinner began, and it was fully midnight when the guests arose, Miss Renton's brother, in his fussy way, telling his sister that they would have to go, and treating Dick in a very cavalier fashion, much to the boy's amusement.

"Well, good-by, Dick," said Mark. "We are off to Europe in the morning and probably shall not see you again."

"We are off in the morning, but there's no mourning—morning but not mourning," laughed Aunt Tryphena, with a smile as broad as her face.

Dick said good-by and saw Foxy Wilmot walking toward the conservatory, followed by Horace Ildone.

He paid his addresses to his hostess, thanking her for the pleasant evening he had spent, and then, getting his coat and hat, started to leave.

"I could kill you for that!" he suddenly heard in a hoarse whisper as he was coming downstairs.

The sound came from the direction of the conservatory, the dining-room being now dark, and in a moment Dick hurried thither through the wide hall.

"That sounded like Ildone's voice," he said to himself.

As he reached the conservatory what little

light there was in it suddenly went out, and he heard Foxy Wilmot gasp and say:

"Confound you, Ildone, you've done for——"

Then there was a heavy fall on the floor, and Dick heard retreating footsteps.

"This is bad business," he heard Ildone say. "I must get out at once. The steamer goes within an hour, but that is——"

"Hallo!" said Dick. "Not so fast, if you please. This case should be investigated."

"Investigate it and be smothered!" muttered the other, and Dick felt himself suddenly pushed aside, not being able to see the man in the dark.

He struck a match, stepped forward, and found Foxy Wilmot lying on the floor with a white and bloodless face turned to the ceiling.

He placed a hand on the man's face and recoiled in horror.

It was deathly cold, and a feeling of terror struck him in an instant.

"Dead!" he gasped. "I cannot stay here. Here is a hoodoo that I can't lift. There is a case, too—my first. 'To the steamer,' he said. One of the early ones, of course. I'll go there and stop him."

Then he hurriedly left the house, finding only one of the servants at the door and saying nothing to him.

He hurried to the first taxi stand and told the driver to take him to the pier of the Altruria, that vessel leaving at one in the morning, as he knew, in order to accommodate passengers and gain time on the other side of the water.

"I've got a case at last," he said to himself, as he reached the pier, "and Mr. Horace Ildone will not get away as easily as he thinks."

At the telephone booth on the pier Dick called up the office, some one being on duty there at all times, and told the man in charge briefly that he was on a case and would report as soon as possible.

Then he hurried to the big ocean liner with a number of passengers making their way aboard, watching one after another as they passed.

"He may have gone on board already," he presently said to himself, and then he went up the gangplank and found the purser.

"Have you lately sold a passage to Mr. Ildone?" he asked. "He will have secured it within the hour."

"Not that I know of. Friend of yours? There are a number of berths still unsold, if you wish one."

"No; but I want to see him very much. He is rather stout and quite good looking, smooth shaven and slightly bald."

"Tilden, did you say? There is no such name here."

"No; Ildone. Horace Ildone, of New York."

"His name is not here, but if he has purchased his ticket so recently I would not have it till after we sail. You might look about and see if you can see him."

"By Jove! the Megantic sails at the same hour as the Altruria," muttered Dick Dodge, as he hurried away. "The fellow may have gone on her. I'll have to look here first and then phone over to her and ask if he is there. I've got a case and I must not let it slip. A murder mystery right at the start is not to be let go readily."

(To be continued)

GOOD READING

KANGAROOS OF OCEAN

Whereas most fishes pay little attention to their offspring, merely depositing their spawn in suitable spawning beds and leaving the young fry to care for itself when the eggs hatch, the sea-horse is a most devoted and painstaking parent.

This fish is provided, in fact, with a pouch similar to that of the kangaroo. In this pouch the eggs are deposited and remain until hatched and some little time afterward.

However, it is not the mother fish who possesses this convenient receptacle, but the father! Once her eggs have been laid the duties of Madame Hippocampus are at an end.

It is her spouse who carries the eggs about with him during their period of incubation and until the babes are strong enough to escape from his capacious pocket, which is situated on the abdomen, at the root of his long curving tail.

FARMING

The pupils who study agriculture in the public schools of New Jersey conduct home projects in farming as a part of their regular school work.

Returns just received by the State Department of Public Instruction show that 399 of these pupils last year cleared, above all expenses, \$69,513.67.

The returns also show that for every dollar spent by the State and local communities for the annual salaries of the teachers and the expense for automobile travel in supervising these projects there was returned \$3.09 to the various communities in the form of profits on the products grown and sold by the pupils.

In this work the pupils are carefully supervised by the teachers of agriculture, who are employed for the calendar years in order that they can be with the boys during the summer as well as during the nine or ten months of the school year.

These projects are a great help in making the school agriculture correlate with practical farm work. The boy in reality becomes a farmer and carries out his project the same as if he were operating the farm as an adult.

HOMES OF FISHES

The dace builds its home in a sort of pyramid. A spot in the bed of a stream is first cleared down to the sand and here the first layer of eggs are placed. The fishes then cover the eggs with a layer of pebbles which they bring to the nest in their mouths. On top of this layer of pebbles another layer of eggs is laid, then another layer of pebbles and so on until a mound some seven or eight inches in height is built.

The lamprey eel also builds its nest in a sort of mound or pyramid. In the early spring it leaves the seaboard and proceeds up some river until it finds a likely spot in which to deposit its spawn. Some of the stones which are brought to the nest are surprisingly large. The pair, in moving a stone that weighs several pounds, place their sucking mouths to it and throwing their tails in

the air raise the stone by a convulsive effort, and the current or tide pushing against the eels and the stone move it along several feet before the weight of the stone drags them to the bottom again. In this way by many repeated efforts the stone is finally conveyed to the nest.

The most vigilant of all nest builders are the four-spined sticklebacks. The various species, though similar in their general style of architecture, vary somewhat in the location of the nests. Some build their nests of weeds and gravel upon the bottom of the sea, others are hung from some overhanging ledge, or swing in the tide from the sunken bough of some overhanging tree, undergoing a process akin to rocking.

Then there are some fish that tote their homes with them in the manner of a snail. The Antennarias intrenches itself among weeds and gravel in which it places its eggs, and entangled firmly among the weeds swims around with its young. The toad-fish also builds its nest somewhat along the order of the Antennarias, entwining itself among weeds and gravel, where it rears its young, whose yolk sacs enable them to cling to the stones of the nest soon after birth, and thus clinging they remain until they are strong enough to swim away.

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INTERESTING RADIO NEWS AND HINTS

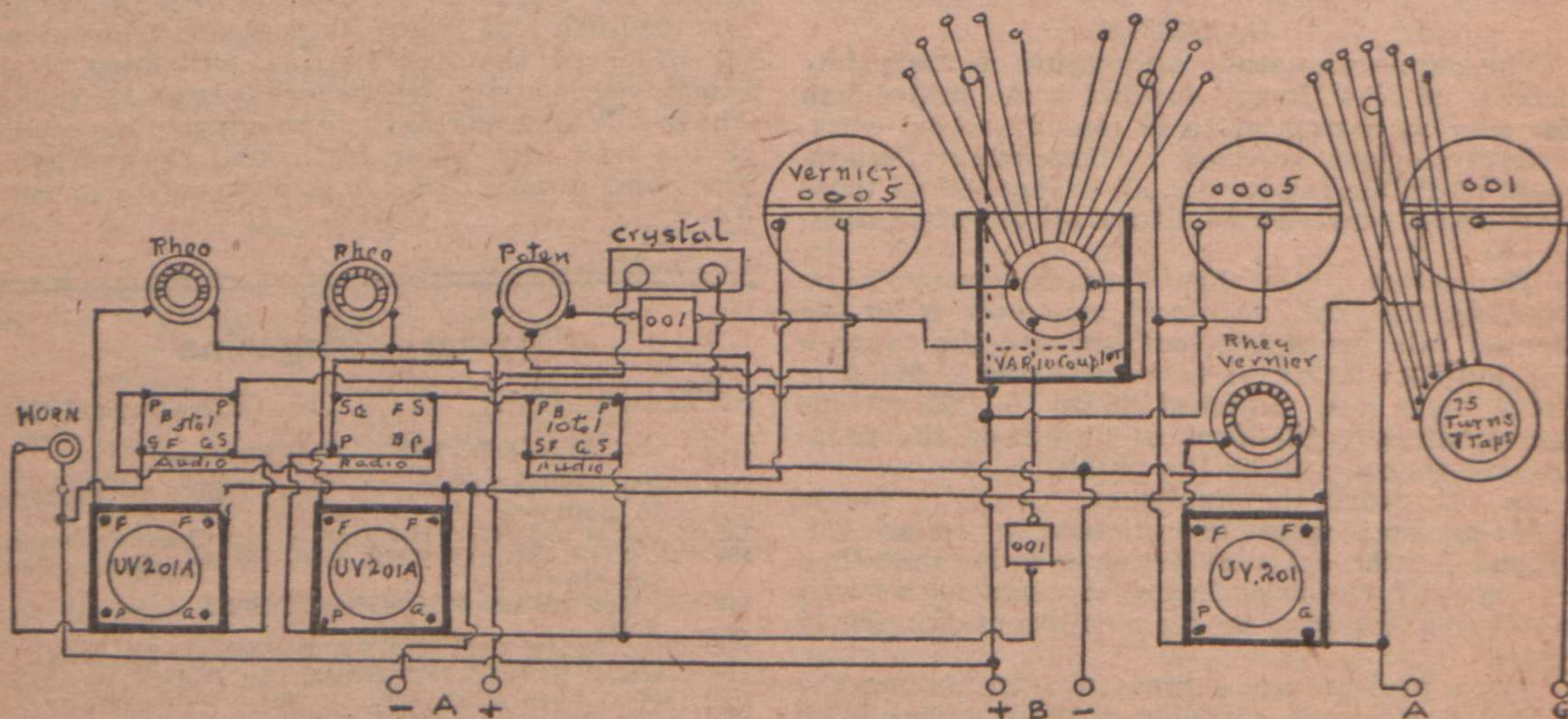
JOHNSTON H. F. REFLEX TWIN CIRCUIT

Here is a radio that will not only pull in local broadcasting stations, but the distant one as well, and it works with a crystal detector. It is a rather large set to build, but as it can pick up Cuba, Omaha, Chicago, Toronto and other distant stations in mid-summer it is a fine set to own. Here are the parts needed to build one:

- 1 Formica panel, size 7x24.
- 1 Baseboard, size 6x23.
- 1 Variocoupler with 10 taps 180 degrees.
- 1 Coil 75 turns No. 24 wire with 7 taps.
- 2 .0005 variable condensers, one vernier.
- 1 .001 variable condenser.
- 1 Vernier 8 ohm rheostat.

wired just the way it shows here, but you must shorten the wires all you can by taking short cuts, providing you do not let the wires come closer than half an inch to each other. Radio amplification calls for short wiring, and this is a radio amplified set.

The front panel carries a dial for each condenser, a knob for each rheostat and the potentiometer, the crystal detector, the switches, taps and the jacks. When making a radio receiver the best plan is to set up the panel and base-board. Then place all the instruments where they should be attached, care being taken to place them where the wiring will be the shortest. When you are satisfied with the locations draw out a plan for the panel on a piece of paper the same size as the panel. Stick it to the face of the panel with mucilage around the edge, and lightly tap the ex-



Johnston H. F. Reflex Twin Circuit

- 2 20-ohm rheostat.
- 1 Potentiometer 300 ohms.
- 1 Crystal detector.
- 3 Lamp sockets.
- 2 U. V. 201-A lamps.
- 1 U. V. 201 detector lamp.
- 2 Audio transformers 10 to 1 and 5 to 1.
- 1 Radio transformer.
- 2 .001 mica condensers.
- 2 Single circuit jacks.
- 6 Double binding-posts.
- 3 Switches.
- 17 Switch points.
- Sphagetti and busbar.

As usual, our wiring diagram shows how the set looks when viewed behind the panel. By adopting this method we make everything plain and simple, so any one can understand it, as few people can read technical plans. The set must be

act places you are going to drill, using a sharp-pointed tool and hammer. Always drill in on the face of the panel, as drilling from the rear may cause the composition to chip around the edges of the holes.

Before mounting the instruments, you can put a dull finish on the panel by rubbing it from side to side with fine emery paper and oil. You then mount the rheostat, potentiometer, the vario-coupler, three condensers, switches and their taps, the jacks and the crystal detector, if you are going to place the latter on the face of the panel for convenience.

The coil, lamp sockets, transformers and battery binding-posts are fastened to the baseboard about where indicated in the diagram. The coil rests at an angle propped up on a small wooden block under the edge toward the panel. This block can be fastened to the baseboard, and the

coil can be secured to the block with a small piece of angle brass. The fixed condensers are fastened to the wiring when the set is soldered up.

A careful study of the diagram shows where each wire is connected. If busbar is used, a very handsome job can be turned out if the angles are neatly bent with a pair of pliers, and very small soldered joints are made. It is always good practice to insulate each wire with spaghetti. The writer always put the spaghetti on after the wires are bent, as this insulation is likely to break at the joint if you bend it with pliers after it covers the wire. It is also important to use as little soldering paste as possible, and to clear off the excess paste when the joint is soldered, to prevent corrosion. Alcohol or gasolene will clear the joints. Never use acids for soldering radio sets. When the set is all wired up, it should be tested before the lamps are placed in the sockets, for if by mistake you make a wrong connection with the "B" battery, it would burn out, and destroy your lamps. You will need a volt-meter to test the circuit, but if you have none your dealer in radio supplies can test it for you. The test is made by removing all the lamps from the set. Then turn on the filament and B batteries. A fifty-volt meter is then applied to the Fx and F— posts on each lamp. If the meter shows over six volts, the current of the B battery is getting into the filament current. Do not put lamps in the sockets until the trouble is corrected.

When sure the set is all right you can light the lamps and proceed to tune it as follows:

The antenna coil switch is first set on the third switch point and the .001 condenser plates turned out two-thirds. The varicoupler coupling is set at about three-fourths its maximum. Next turn out the plates of the primary condenser .6665, and bring in a station with the grid condenser of the second lamp. You can build up the signal by varying the two small condensers, turning the antenna condenser, and adjusting the potentiometer which gives its loudest sounds when placed on the negative side. The antenna condenser is not as critical as the other two. It is hard to tune this set at first, but easy enough when you acquire the knack of it.

The set is noiseless, and should be operated with as high plate voltage as possible.

When laying out the panels it is best arranged by having the two jacks at the bottom on the right-hand side, when facing the panel. Above the jacks are two rheostats and above the rheostats the crystal detector. The two .0005 condenser dials with the variocoupler dial between them are in a line in the middle of the panel, the potentiometer is above the .0005 dial on the right-hand side, the two variocoupler switches and taps are above the variacoupler dial, and the antenna switch and taps are above the .0005 left-hand condenser. At the extreme left, at the bottom is the third rheostat, and above it the dial for the .001 variable condenser.

The aerial, ground and battery binding-posts are at the back of the baseboard, close to its edge, so you can connect up the batteries behind the receiver.

The radio transformer can be placed behind the two rheostats on the right-hand side, one of the

audio transformers can stand behind the crystal detector and the second audio transformer can stand at the rear of the baseboard behind the radio transformer. The lamps are in a line near the rear of the baseboard, one behind the left-hand .0005 condenser, the next behind the crystal detector, and the third behind the first right-hand jack.

This set is really one step of radio amplification added to a reflex circuit, and gives one step of tuned radio, one step of transformer-coupled radio amplification, crystal detection and one step of audio frequency amplification on two tubes. The coil employed in the antenna circuit is bank-wound on a 4-inch tube and has 70 turns of No. 24 wire tapped at 30, 40, 50, 60, 65, 70 and 75 turns. When the set is working it is easy to find out if it is functioning as a detector. This is done by lifting the cat's whisker from the crystal, and if the set works with it lifted, it indicates that the crystal is not working. The second tube not burning bright enough and acting as a detector is the cause. The weaker the signal is when the cat's whisker is lifted, the better the set is working. The battery voltage varies with different sets. The filament will, of course, require 6 volts, but you can try $22\frac{1}{2}$ or 45 on the plate circuit. If higher voltage is needed it can go up to 90 volts for 201-A U. V. tubes, but a higher voltage should be applied with caution. The tuned radio frequency part of the set will take care of the new broadcasting wave lengths, and adds a novel feature to the reflex circuit.

RADIO AMATEURS HELP

Sticking to their radio sets for three days and nights during the unexpected rise of the Arkansas River, radio amateurs in this vicinity recently maintained communication between this place and Tulsa when floods swept a large section of the Tulsa County. Fully 500 people were driven from their homes and thousands of dollars damage was caused by the high water which put wire lines out of commission.

The towns are connected normally by electric interurban, four telephones and the telegraph line, but all were down except the latter and one telephone. Most of the flood victims, whose homes had either been destroyed or made uninhabitable, were housed temporarily at a park here and fed until the water began to recede. Meanwhile scores who frantically besieged local telephones had to wait three hours before they could get a call, though the distance is only seven miles.

Halton H. Friend, a member of the American Radio Relay League, offered to send messages through by radio, also bulletins on the rise of the river for the daily newspapers at Tulsa. He got in touch with Raymond P. McKinney, 5 S G, and John B. Lewis, 5 W X, at Tulsa, also Earl W. Abrey, 5 G A at Osceola, Ark. The first night they kept 15-minute schedules until 2 a. m. and the next two nights 40-minute schedules until after midnight for the emergency.

Scores of personal messages were sent, relieving the minds of relatives of those who had lost their homes. Amateur stations were also utilized by newspaper reporters who were unable to use wire lines on account of the limited service.

PLUCK AND LUCK

NEW YORK, SEPTEMBER 19, 1923

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ITEMS OF INTEREST

CLOAK 3,000 YEARS OLD

German archeologists have been called into consultation over a woolen cloak which was unearthed by peat diggers at Skara, Sweden, and which is believed to be between 3,000 and 4,000 years old.

The garment of the Swedish contemporary of Hammurabi, King of Babylon, and of Abraham, was found in a remarkable state of preservation, due to the character of the soil.

SOLE SURVIVOR OF CUSTER'S MESSACRE

The Interior Department has assured itself of a survivor of the Custer massacre. His name is Shuh-shee-hash, alias Curley, a Crow Indian now living on the Crow Indian Reservation in Montana, and he is now drawing a pension from the Government for his services in the Indian campaigns of 1876. The War Department records show that he enlisted as a private April 10, 1876, and was discharged Sept. 30, 1876, by reason of the muster out of the detachment of Indian scouts. He was with General Custer June 21 and took part in the attack on the Sioux village June 25 with the other Crow scouts. The bodies of the other three were found, but his was not. Curley was in the fight until the end, when he mixed up with the Sioux and the Cheyennes, who did not recognize him. He rejoined his detachment June 30.

ARGENTINE EXPLORERS FIND OLD METEORITE

A meteorite, which is said to have fallen in the territory of Chaco, Argentina, 300 years ago and which has been the object of numerous expeditions since 1774, has been rediscovered by the explorers Le Berthon, Santillan, Alzugaray and Bellotti, who have sent a fragment weighing about one kilo to the Government of the Province of Santiago Del Estero.

Traces of the meteorite were found, and the place where it fell was known before 1812, but subsequently it was lost, after which several expeditions failed to locate it. It is said that it was

about the middle of the seventeenth century when Spaniards guided by the Vilelas Indians found the great meteoric mass half buried in the sand. The place was named Campo Otumpa, and an analysis made of the meteorite in 1812 showed that it consisted of meteoric iron, pure nickel and cobalt. One piece was taken to Buenos Aires and another sent to the British Museum. Two pistols are said to have been made from the metal and presented to the president of the United States as a token of appreciation for his sympathy toward Argentine independence.

This discovery is likely to cause not only much scientific discussion, but much public interest in the outcome of the discoverers' claim to the reward of 2,000 gold pieces and ten square leagues of land which the Government of Santiago Del Estero decreed in 1873 for the discovery of this meteorite.

The mass, it is asserted, weighs more than fifty-seven tons. It measures 2.80 meters in length, 1.82 in width and 1.40 in thickness.

LAUGHS

Negative—How do you know he is dishonest?
Positive—Dishonest? Why, I once saw him playing at solitaire, and he couldn't play the game without cheating.

Mrs. Timmis—I hear your cook has left you. What was the trouble?
Mrs. Rockwell—Our kitchen is so small that she had to put her bicycle in the cellar, and she thought the dampness wasn't good for it.

"Paw," asked the little boy, "didn't you say in your speech that you expected the map of the world to be changed soon?"
"I think I did," said the orator. "Then what is the use of my studyin' jography?"

Policeman—You are selling liquor after hours.
Proprietor of Saloon—No; these men are burglars, and they are holding me up for drinks.
Policeman—Ah! I owe you an apology. Pardon my intrusion. Good-night, all.

"Do you mean to say that manager has engaged you for next season at \$500 a week?" said one actor.
"That's what he promises."
"But, my dear fellow, that is a fabulous salary!"
"No, I wouldn't call it fabulous. But I'm afraid it'll turn out to be mythical."

Mistress—Why, Bridget, you surely don't consider these windows washed?
Bridget—Sure, I washed 'em nicely on the inside, mum, so ye can look out; but I intentionally left 'em a little dirty on the outside so thim aignorant Jones children nixt door couldn't look in.

Miss Parvenu (just home from abroad)—There we saw the Venus de Milo. She was very lovely, but she had no arms.
Miss Geraldine Parvenu (who stayed at home)—Did you look on the door of her coach?

INTERESTING NEWS ARTICLES

SELLS FAMILY FOR \$100

John Miller sold his wife and seven children to Michael Davis of Beech Bottom, W. Va., and then disappeared. Brooke County, W. Va., authorities are seeking him. Davis, however, is in Wellsburg jail on complaint of Mrs. Miller.

"I am tired of married life," Miller is reported to have told Davis, "and I will sell my family for \$100." Davis so informed Sheriff Stephens and said he accepted the offer. When he called at the Miller home for the family Mrs. Miller drove him away and swore out a warrant.

What charge will be made is uncertain. He is held now for "disorderly conduct."

GOOD-BY TO PAPER CAR-WHEELS

The paper car-wheel, that once made Pullman traveling a much less noisy business than it might have been, must roll into the discard. The paper wheels were not able to stand the new types of heavy construction.

The paper wheels were made of 192 sheets of strawboard paper pasted together, pressed while wet, baked, and dried in kilns for six months. These paper forms were then turned in a lathe to the proper shape and size, and fitted with steel tires and side-walls.

A 38-inch paper wheel weighed about 1,070 pounds. The new wheels, which are 36 inches in diameter and entirely of steel, weigh 925 pounds.

The paper wheel had to be discarded because, with the new heavy cars, braking increased almost 100 per cent, and the paper did not expand with the steel tire in response to the friction of the brakes.

NATURAL WOOD WITH ARTIFICIAL TINT

Many of our most famous woods are known by their colors. Ebony wood, we know, is black. Walnut is a brownish-black and mahogany is red. Were we to go into a furniture store to purchase a walnut table, we should be considerably surprised if the merchant were to attempt to sell us a table made from a greenish-colored wood and tell us that it was walnut. We'd probably walk out and brand him as several kinds of a liar. But he might be perfectly truthful. The "black" walnut might be green, or, conversely, the green wood might be "black" walnut.

Science has discovered that the wood of growing trees may be colored with aniline dyes so that tinted lumber will be produced several months later when the tree is cut and sawed. A slanting hole is bored through the foot of the tree trunk and into this is poured a dye solution, filling the hole to the brim. The natural circulatory system of the tree absorbs the dye and distributes it to every cell, so that when the lumber is sawed the wood is tinted. It is said that almost any color may be effected in this way, so don't be astonished if your furniture dealer tells you that a table made from a green wood is "black" walnut or ebony or mahogany. He may be right.

2-MILE RISE OF OCEAN BED WITHIN 23 YEARS

Officers of the Eastern Telegraph Company's ship which is repairing a broken cable between St. Helena and Capetown report that the ocean bed has risen to within three-quarters of a mile of the surface at a point where the chart showed the depth to be three miles. The soundings for the chart were taken in 1899, the year in which the cable was laid. The discovery suggests that there has been a recent submarine convulsion.

Scientists were both interested and surprised at the report that the ocean floor between Capetown and St. Helena had risen two and a quarter miles. There is no record of any recent disturbance in that section of the globe, although there have been submarine convulsions between San Francisco and the Hawaiian Islands which raised a huge tidal wave and disturbances in the sea off the west coast of South America.

The stretch between the two points mentioned in the cablegram is a long one. Any seismic disturbance in the sea changes the configuration of the ocean floor and plays the mischief with the cables. Recently a new depth finder has been put in use which enables soundings to be made at a much greater depth than formerly.

GOLDFISH TO REPLACE CHILDREN AND DOGS

Barred from keeping babies, dogs and cats in apartments, city dwelling Americans have turned to the goldfish. Upon this flamboyant minnow is being lavished all the affection that is denied its usual objects by city restrictions.

This came to light when the Grassyforks fisheries, near Martinsville, Ind., announced plans for raising 5,000,000 goldfish next year. Heart-hungry flat dwellers will snap up the 5,000,000 as soon as the fish are large enough to leave the breeding ponds, officials of the fisheries company predicted.

The goldfish is an ideal city pet, according to Dwight S. Ritter, distribution manager. Clean? Why, it lives in water. It is quiet and companionable and gives a home atmosphere to two rooms and a kitchenette that can be equalled by nothing but a rubber plant.

The local hatchery is a virtual goldfish trust, supplying more than 60 per cent. of the goldfish sold in the United States. The fish are raised in 170 ponds covering seventy-five acres. Some of the large ponds contain 250,000 fish, it is estimated.

Ten varieties of fish are raised, including the common goldfish, the Japasene fan and nymph, the American fantail, the Chinese moor and telescope, the Orunda, the Lion Head and the Calico. The common fish are not allowed to mingle with the more aristocratic varieties, but are kept in separate ponds.

Caring for the fish occupies the entire time of a number of men. The fish are fed a mixture of ground meal, middlings and oats, prepared in a special kitchen.

PLUCK AND LUCK

HERE AND THERE

BRITISH FARMER DIGS UP COIN WORTH \$1,000

A Sheffield farmer, while digging in his fields recently found a silver coin of antique origin, but in a splendid state of preservation. He had it appraised and found it to be worth 250 pounds sterling. The coin is a Charles I crown and was minted at the time when silver was very scarce.

WORLD'S SEVEN WONDERS

Three groups of "wonders," each containing seven, are listed as seven wonders of the ancient world, seven wonders of the Middle Ages and seven wonders of the modern world.

The first group comprises pyramids of Egypt, hanging gardens of Babylon, temple of Diana at Ephesus, statue of Jupiter by Rhodias, mausoleum of Artemisia, Colossus of Rhodes.

The second group comprises the Coliseum of Rome, catacombs of Alexandria, great wall of China, Stonehenge, leaning tower of Pisa, porcelain tower of Nanking, mosque of St. Sophia.

The modern group comprises wireless, telephone, airplane, radium, antiseptics and anti-toxins, spectrum analysis, X-ray.

WAXED PAPER FOR SHANGHAI BAKERS

Shanghai bakers used to wrap their bread and cakes in nice green lotus leaves. But the days of this romantic practice are gone forever. According to the new regulations covering bakery products, effective in Shanghai June 1, bread and other products must be suitably wrapped in greaseproof or similar paper. The clause in the regulation covering this particular requirement quoted by Assistant Trade Commissioner A. V. Smith in a report to the Department of Commerce, reads as follows:

"That bread and bakery products shall, upon sale or when carried or handled for sale, or delivered in baskets, vehicles or otherwise, be suitably wrapped in greaseproof paper or other cleanly covering, in such manner as to completely protect the bread from dirt, dust and flies, or from harmful contact in handling."

BEETLES BORE THROUGH LEAD CABLES

Beetles, which bore through lead cable, but which, nevertheless, do not or cannot penetrate pure gum rubber, have proved a serious problem and pest in California and many other parts of the United States. One of the most important injuries inflicted by these beetles is the damage done to the lead sheathing of telephone cables in California. The beetles bore circular holes in the sheathing, about one-tenth inch in diameter. Moisture enters the cable through these holes, causing a short-circuiting of the wires and interruption of service to the public. As one hole may put from 50 to 600 or more telephones out of use for from one to ten days, the damage is rather extensive. From experiments undertaken by the Bureau of Entomology of the United States De-

partment of Agriculture it has been learned that the beetle is able to penetrate any lead alloy used as a cable sheathing or any poison or repellant placed on it. Probably it is able to penetrate the poisons because it does not feed as it bores through. Beef tallow, when sufficiently soft, will stick to the beetle and suffocate it, and has been used with some success on the rings which suspend the cable, since practically all the boring is done near the rings. Layers of friction tape impede the boring, and thin sheets of copper, zinc and steel prevent it.

A GREAT MOUNTAIN RIVER

The Snake or Shoshone River is one of the little known wonders of our country. The Geological Survey has been making an extended survey of the Snake or, more properly, Shoshone River between Huntington, Oreg., and Lewiston, Idaho. The Shoshone River is one of the most wonderful rivers of the world and rivals any in this country for grandeur of scenery. It rises in the mountains of western Wyoming, flows through Idaho to the Oregon State boundary and forms the boundary for 100 miles between Oregon and Idaho. It then flows westward across the southeastern part of Washington and enters into the Columbia River. Its length is estimated to be about 1,000 miles. Where the North and South Forks unite the elevation is 4,800 feet, and at the mouth, where it enters the Columbia, it is 340 feet. Its course is through a mountainous country, here and there entering plains, winding around seemingly extinct volcanoes, passing through fertile lands in Washington. It is noted for its wonderful canyons, and in places for the springs that pour in great abundance from its northern wall. A fine exhibition of cataracts is furnished at the Thousand Springs, near Hagerman, Idaho, between Salmon Falls and the point where the Salmon Falls River enters from the south. The springs in countless numbers issue from rocks far up the faces of nearly vertical precipices. The water does not make the descent in a single leap, but in a series of cascades. It is lashed into foam by contact with the rocks, and the beauty of the scene defies description. The Shoshone Falls are among the wonders of the world. Many of the canyons of the river are from 1,000 to 3,000 feet in depth and the water flows rapidly over irregular beds, forming long rapids and magnificent cascades. A number of side alcoves, or short, "blind" canyons, leading off the main canyons, owe their existence to great springs. These side canyons receive no surface streams, and there is no other explanation of their formation. The springs undermine the rock by removing the soft material on which it rests. The rock falls into the spring and gradually sinks into its soft bed, and thus the canyons are formed. Often the undermining is on so large a scale that the falling rock becomes a landslide. The water in the streams which the springs form is intensely blue and very clear. Some of them are well stocked with trout, although on the edge of a desert.



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The hippo may be shot in water. When mortally wounded he will sink and will not reappear on the surface for several hours. If he is only slightly wounded, he may charge, but more often he will flee and die in the reeds to serve as food for scavenger birds or crocodiles.

The other and more sporting way is to shoot him on land. This is, as a rule, only possible at night or late in the evening and early in the morning. It would not be wise to find oneself between the river and the wounded hippo, for he at once makes for the water by the shortest route, and he goes so fast that getting out of the way requires pretty speedy feet and great coolness of nerve.



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